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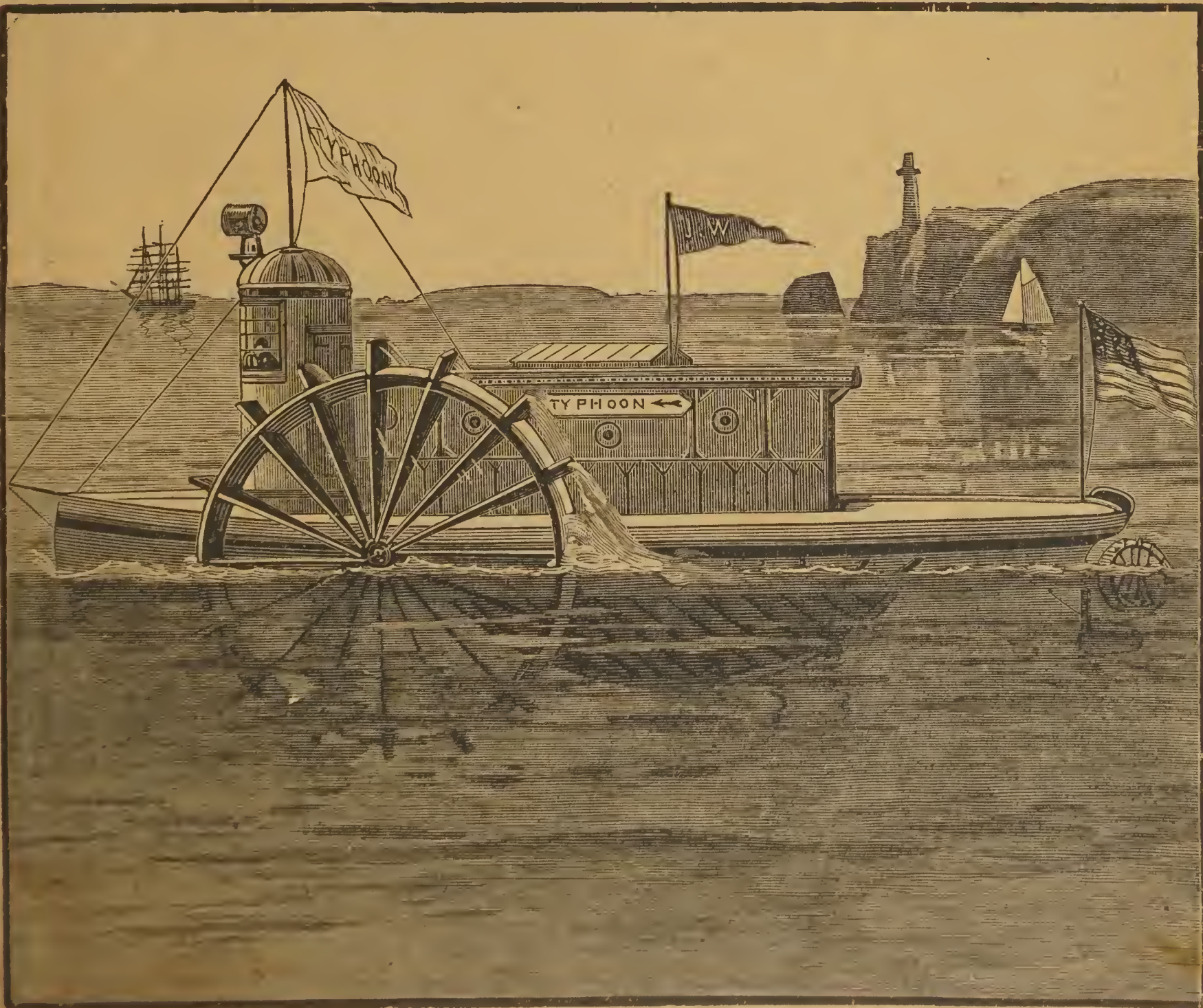
Jack Wright,

THE BOY INVENTOR,

AND HIS ELECTRIC TRICYCLE-BOAT;

Or, THE TREASURE OF THE SUN-WORSHIPERS.

By "NONAME."



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JACK WRIGHT, THE BOY INVENTOR, And His Electric Tricycle-Boat; OR, THE TREASURE OF THE SUN-WORSHIPERS.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Jack Wright, the Boy Inventor, and His Deep Sea Diving Bell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

SAVED FROM THE THUGS.

A RETIRED sea-faring man, named Bill Wright, had solved the secret of sub-marine navigation, and with the assistance of his motherless son, Jack, had perfected the model of an under water boat some years ago.

Unfortunately, this celebrated inventor died before he could put the contrivance to practical use, and it devolved upon his boy to do so.

Jack Wright had made such a pronounced success of this invention, that he ultimately gained a large fortune, and then devoted his time to inventing numerous other patents, as he had inherited his father's genius, and thus made himself famous all the world over.

One cold November day, the talented boy finished the construction of a marvelous boat, built on the tricycle model, and taking his specifications, drawings and model, he proceeded to Washington, from the village of Wrightstown where he lived, to get the invention patented.

By the end of the month this was duly accomplished, and Jack took the train to New York, where he arrived late in the evening.

The boy was then a dashing fellow of less than nineteen, with a stalwart, symmetrical form, nicely clothed in a stylish suit, he possessed a rather thin face, with a pointed nose and flashing black eyes, and his character was bold, rather reckless, his judgment keen, and his disposition very generous.

He crossed the ferry from Jersey City, and walked along West street for the purpose of reaching a car to cross the metropolis, and go up-town in the elevated, to a railroad that ran to his native village.

Darkness had settled down over the city, and it began to drizzle.

Along the deserted street there gleamed lights in the windows of tobacconists, rum shops, and sailors' boarding-houses, across the gloomy thoroughfare arose a forest of masts and a maze of rigging on the ships that creaked and bumped along the piers and bulkheads, while from the river there came the dull clangs of bells, and the hoarse shrieks of whistles on passing boats, going up and down the stream.

Jack raised his umbrella, and passing swiftly along the black, glistening pavements, he fell into a deep train of thought over his new invention when he was suddenly startled by hearing a hoarse cry for help.

Recalled to a sense of his surroundings the boy suddenly paused, and glancing up he saw three men struggling in the

light of a street lamp a dozen yards ahead of him on the sidewalk.

Two of these men were heavily built fellows in pea jackets and slouched hats, they wore full dark beards, and were both intent upon gaining the mastery of a slender young man, with a dark, smooth face, whose active figure was clad in a caped coat.

It was he who uttered the appealing cry, but Jack saw that one of the two ruffians had clutched him by the throat, choking him and bearing him backwards to the pavement, the rascal raised a dagger in his fist to plunge it into the fallen man's body.

Thrilled by the tragic scene, Jack tore a revolver from his hip pocket, rushed toward the trio, and shouted ringingly:

"Stop, or I'll shoot you!"

"Not on yer life!" hissed the man with the knife.

"Save me!" gasped the fallen individual, struggling to get up.

"Get the paper!" yelled the standing ruffian frantically.

Bang! went Jack's revolver the next moment, and the ruffian dropped his dagger, bounded to his feet uttering a cry of pain, and as they turned their faces toward Jack he saw that they wore black masks.

"I'm plugged!" groaned the wounded wretch.

"Kill them!" shouted the fallen young man furiously as he arose.

"Run—for the cab!" hissed the inactive thug, starting away.

"Halt, or I'll drop you!" cried Jack, raising his revolver again.

The two men were desperate, however, ignored his order, and ran up the street.

A cab was awaiting them at the curb, and they sprang in and were whirled rapidly away, while Jack ran up to their victim.

He found the young man in the act of picking up his cane and hat and observed that the stranger wore magnificent diamonds.

"Did they injure you?" asked the boy, as he pocketed his revolver.

"Not much," panted the other, as he sized Jack up. "I thought you was a policeman at first. I am very much obliged for your timely help."

"What did they attack you for—to rob you?"

"I think they did," replied the other, as he fumbled with feverish haste and anxiety in his pockets. "But—ah, here's the paper—they didn't get what they were after, thank Heaven!"

"Oh, they wasn't after your jewelry?"

"No, indeed. They were after this roll of parchment. It is worth thousands of dollars to them. They would have succeeded in getting it too, only for you."

"Well, I'm glad I was of such great service to you. Do you know them?"

"I do. One was Pedro Durango, a South American bandit, and the fellow whom he hired to stab me, was a New York thug, named Robin Hood. They have been tracking me all over New York, since I recently arrived from Lima. This evening I was calling at a shipowner's office, down the street, and those two fellows probably dogged my footsteps from my hotel, and waylaid me."

"They must have had a deep motive in trying to rob you."

"It was to wrest from me this parchment, as I have told you before. The paper contains an Inca's description in hieroglyphics, of where most of the treasure of the sunworshippers was carried to by the order of Atahualpa, when the Spaniards, under Pizarro, invaded Peru."

"What!" cried Jack, in amazement. "Do you mean to tell me that you have discovered the wonderful secret which thousands have vainly endeavored to solve during the past decade?"

"I have, and it is now my plan to get some wealthy shipowner interested enough in the matter to fit out an expedition, to go off in quest of this gold," replied the stranger.

"May I ask your name, sir?"

"It is Oliver Aljoe, and yours?"

"Jack Wright, of Wrightstown. Here is my card."

"Can it be possible you are the inventor of submarine boats about whom I have heard, and read of so much in the newspapers?"

"As there is only one individual of my name and profession that I know about, I must be the person you refer to," replied Jack, nodding.

"By thunder, this is a surprise! I wonder if I could induce you to start in one of your miraculous boats in quest of this treasure?"

"If you could convince me that there is foundation in fact for your story, I might be tempted to embark on such a voyage," the boy replied, encouragingly. "I have just had an electric tricycle-boat invented, and would like nothing better than to try it on such a trip as you propose."

Oliver Aljoe was delighted.

Here was a chance which he had been anxiously searching for.

Destitute of sufficient capital himself, he had no means of carrying out the project, and had found it hard to convince anyone whom he had approached, that there was certainly enough in the matter to warrant the risk of such an expedition.

"Mr. Wright," he exclaimed, eagerly, "you cannot imagine how your words delight me. Let me tell you my story about this wonderful treasure, and I will prove to you that there is no humbug in the matter."

"Most willingly," assented Jack. "But this is a very disagreeable and inconvenient place, to stay talking in. Suppose we go on to a more favorable spot?"

"Perhaps I am detaining you?"

"Oh, I was on my way home from Washinton."

"Suppose I accompany you up to Wrightstown?"

"You can, if you choose, and on the way there, you can tell me all about the treasure of the sun worshippers."

"Good! I have nothing to keep me in New York."

With this understanding they went up-town, and boarding a train bound for Wrightstown, they left New York.

The young inventor was quite favorably impressed with his new found acquaintance, and on the way had discovered him to be a nervous, yet courageous fellow, with sound, honest principles.

His clean-shaven face was bronzed by the sun, and the texture of his clothing was of good quality, he was unassum-

ing in manner, and he was very enthusiastic over his project.

"To begin my story," said he, "when the train started, let me tell you that I was left an orphan when quite young and, having a roving disposition, when I got older I shipped on a South American steamer as steward and held that position until the vessel was wrecked on the coast. Among the passengers was Pedro Durango, and he and I were the only ones who reached shore alive. We made our way inland and stumbled across a hut in the woods in which dwelt an old Indian woman. Partaking of her hospitality, we remained at the hut several days, and in the interval were surprised to see that she possessed many ancient articles made of pure gold. She confessed to us that she owned a parchment written by a priest of the Incas, which stated where the treasures of the Incas were hidden, from which she had procured the valuables we saw in her hut. Durango's cupidity gained the mastery of him one night during my absence, and he struck the unlucky woman what he thought to be a death blow, seized all her valuables, and vanished. When I came back I found her breathing her last as she laid before the fire, and she told me the story of my companion's crime, and tearing up three loose adobe bricks from in front of the fire, she revealed a box buried in the ground underneath. From the box she drew the roll of parchment Durango tried to steal this evening and gave it to me, saying that it was mine if I would endeavor to avenge her death by bringing Durango to justice. I swore to do so, and she died a few minutes afterwards. I saw Durango at the window, looking in and listening to all that transpired. I sprang to my feet and rushed to the door, but when I got out he was gone."

"Well?" queried Jack, as Aljoe paused.

"I left the hut, and seeing nothing more of the South American, I continued my journey inland, and finally reached Tarapaca—"

"Ah! Then you were wrecked on the coast of Peru?" asked Jack.

"So I discovered. Here I got the parchment translated piecemeal by different individuals who could read the hieroglyphics, thus preserving the secret of its context, when I discovered that the treasure was hidden upon one of the islands in the Lake of Titicaca."

"My next move was to procure a small sailboat and proceed there to verify the truth of the story. Unluckily for me, I found the lake swarming with a wild tribe who yet adhere to their idolatry of the sun. They captured me and condemned me to death, as they do any white man who dares to venture upon their domains."

"I was carried into an ancient city, consisting of old Inca temples and other similar buildings. Here I saw a wonderful display of golden weapons and ornaments, such as the old Indian woman had whom Durango murdered. It convinced me that the parchment was no humbug."

"I was lucky enough finally to escape from a prison in which my captors confined me, and reaching my boat, I got back to the main. From there I drifted to Lima, and there encountered Durango. He proved to be a noted bandit, and he was frantic to wrest the parchment away from me so he could get the Inca's gold."

"I escaped the snares he set for me and came north, he dogging me all the way until I reached New York. Since then he has been doing his utmost to get the paper from me, but I have thus far defeated him. Nor can I manage to catch him, to hand him over to the law and have him punished for murdering the old Indian woman, he is so slippery."

This was about the substance of Oliver Aljoe's story, but there were many details attached to it that convinced Jack that the man told the truth, and was worthy of his confidence.

"I believe your story," said the boy, after a pause, "and when we get to my house I want to see that parchment and translation. If it proves all I expect of it, I shall go in search of that treasure in my electric tricycle boat."

"You will find it more than convincing," replied Aljoe, vehemently.

"Wrightstown!" cried the conductor just then, and they arose and left the car together.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANCIENT PARCHMENT.

As Jack and his companion alighted from the train two other men got off the rear car and slunk behind the depot out of sight.

They were the fellows who attacked Oliver Aljoe in New York.

They had tracked the young inventor and his companion in the cab, and alighting at the railroad depot had gone with them to Wrightstown.

Unaware that the villains were following them, Jack and Aljoe started for the boy's magnificent house in the suburbs.

The village was a beautiful place, surrounding a bay on the coast, and consisted of several business streets and a large number of private houses, some public buildings, factories and churches.

A wide, deep creek flowed inland from the bay, and the young inventor had built a commodious workshop at the end of his garden upon the right hand embankment of this stream.

It was in that building he evolved his wonderful inventions.

This house was a mansion, facing a fine, broad, tree-shaded street, and he led Aljoe in, and they passed into the boy's library.

This room was upon the ground floor, and contained a fine collection of books, maps, charts, and instruments of various kinds, leather-upholstered furniture, and a cheerful grate fire.

As Jack entered the room a little red monkey reached its paw out between the bars of a cage that hung on the wall and grabbed his hat.

It uttered a howl of delight, and tried to get the headgear through the openings in the wires to tear it to pieces, when there sounded a roaring voice at the other side of the room, shouting:

"Jack, by thunder! An'—hey. Whiskers, ye blasted swab, le' go that hat, gol' durn yer buttons, or I'll rake ye fore an' aft!"

It was an old sailor who uttered these words, and with a squeak of alarm Whiskers, the monkey, dropped the derby to the floor.

Jack laughed, picked it up, and extended his hand to the old sailor as he came stumping across the room on a wooden leg.

"Tim Topstay, I'm glad to see you again!" said the boy, as he shook hands, and then he introduced Aljoe.

The ancient mariner was an individual of about forty, rigged out in a nautical costume, his sun burned face being adorned with a sandy beard, and one of his optics being made of glass.

He had been a United States marine, and now lived with Jack; he had always gone with the boy on his voyages, and his most noted characteristics were an inordinate love for tobacco, and the number of lies he uttered about his own exploits.

Tim owned the monkey in the cage, and had taught him many tricks.

"Welcome home," said he, heartily. "Wrightstown's been awful blue ter me since yer went away, my lad. I hopes as yer didn't hev no trouble ter git yer patent fer ther Typhoon?"

"None in the least, Tim. And besides that, I've just discovered a use to put it to," said Jack. "But where is Fritz?"

He referred to a fat Dutch boy named Fritz Schneider, who also lived with him, and accompanied him on his voyages.

An expressive grin overspread Tim's rugged face. He pointed with his thumb at a closet.

"I reckon as he's in thar," he replied.

"Tim, I hope you haven't been playing your usual practical jokes upon each other while I've been gone?" severely asked Jack.

"Lor' no; wouldn't do no sich thing," asserted Tim, innocently. "Yer see, I started in ter tell him a story of wot happened ter me when I wuz in ther navy, and ther lubber hauled out that 'ere ole accordeon o' his'n, well know'n as I hates it like pizen. I told him ter stop playin', an' as he wouldn't obey orders, I ups an' jams him inter ther closet thar. He's kicked an' pounded-ter git out till he's exhausted now."

Jack opened the closet door.

Hardly had he done so when Fritz sprang out.

Thinking Jack was Tim, as he had not distinguished the boy's voice, he uttered a roar of rage, and jumped upon the young inventor.

"*Donner und blitzen!*" he roared, wildly, as he straddled Jack's waist, and grabbed him around the neck with both arms, "for vot——"

"Hold on there, Fritz, you've got hold of the wrong party," cried the boy.

"Shimney Christmas. Id vas Shack!" shouted the fat boy.

And he dropped to the floor upon his feet, and warmly shook hands with the young inventor, forgetting all about his anger at Tim, in his delight at welcoming his best friend home again.

Fritz was a little older than Jack.

He was short and very fat, his hair was yellow, his eyes blue, his stomach enormous, and he was of a fiery temper and brave as a lion.

Expert as an electrician, he had proven to be a valuable acquisition to the young inventor, while as a cook he was unsurpassed.

He had a talkative big green parrot named Bismark, in the closet with him, which he had captured in Africa, and it now came stalking out, screeching and growling in hoarse tones:

"I'm a devil? I'm a devil!"

The monkey and parrot were sworn enemies, and never lost a chance of fighting whenever they met on an equal footing.

Laughing at the comical bird, Jack sat down at the table with his friends, and told them Oliver Aljoe's story.

It amazed them not a little, for they were well aware that numerous expeditions had set out at different periods in search of the Peruvian inca's gold, without ever finding it.

If the ancient parchment was genuine, and Aljoe's story true, this discovery was bound to be one of the most wonderful ever made, as the treasure was supposed to be worth millions.

Jack examined the parchment scroll.

It was covered with singular hieroglyphics, and apparently was a very ancient document as it was greatly discolored.

"You said you had a translation of these symbols?" the boy queried of the young rover.

"I have," replied Aljoe, producing a paper from his pocket and handing it to Jack. "Here it is. Read it for yourself."

Upon the square sheet of paper were posted a dozen smaller pieces of different colors, shapes and sizes, each written by different hands.

The composite translation showed clearly that it had been made up by numerous individuals, and then was put together to form one article of reading.

The original parchment was made of a piece of tanned and bleached skin, to which were attached a number of quipus or twisted woolen cords upon which other smaller cords of different colors were tied.

On these cross threads, the color, length, number of knots and distance of one from another, all had their significance as a sort of rude alphabet known to the Incas.

The crude hieroglyphics were in the Quichua language, in the Maya alphabet on the parchment, and as Jack was somewhat versed in antiquities, and had a book of reference to compare the originals with, he quickly established the fact that the parchment and cords were genuine ancient articles.

He then turned his attention to the translation into English which was literal, and transcribed from the composite letter written in Spanish.

The context was as follows, and Jack read it aloud:

"In 1475 Huayna Capac ascended the Inca throne, and under his rule the empire attained its greatest extent and the height of its glory. His sway extended from the equatorial valley of the Amazon to the temperate plains of Chili, and from the sandy shores of the Pacific to the marshy sources of the Paraguay.

"The wonderful city of Cuzeo was the great center, broad roads branching from it south, north, west and east, and ramified through every part of the kingdom. In their construction galleries were cut for leagues through the living rock; rivers were crossed by bridges of plaited osiers that swung in the air; the precipices were ascended by stairs artificially cut, and the valleys were filled with solid masonry. The mines yielded rich treasures, and the nation was happy in its worship of the golden sun god.

"Upon his deathbed the great Inca expressed a wish that the Kingdom of Quito should pass to Atahualpa, one of his sons, and that all his territories should fall to his son Huascar, the heir to the crown.

"Between these two princes quarrels resulting in war arose, and when Pizarro entered Peru he found the country occupied by rival factions.

"The Spaniards captured Atahualpa, and proceeding to Caxamalca, where Huascar was stationed, a prisoner, they murdered him, and set out for Cuzco.

"Warned of their approach, the palaces and temples were stripped of most of their golden treasures, and were carried by couriers to Lake Titicaca, where they were consigned to the care of an army upon the Island of Coricancha.

"Here a city of oblong buildings in granite and porphyry stood; the walls were thickly studded with plates and bosses of gold and silver, they contained exquisite imitations of human and other figures, plants, and hidden among the metallic foliage, and creeping among the roots were many brilliantly-colored birds, serpents and lizards, made chiefly of precious stones.

"On the western wall, opposite the portal of the Temple of the Sun was placed the god of the nation. It consisted of a large human face of gold, with innumerable golden rays emanating from it in every direction.

"When the early beams of the morning sun fell upon the brilliant golden disc, they were reflected from it as from a mirror, and again reflected throughout the temple by the numberless plates, cornices, bands and images of gold, until the temple seemed aglow with sunshine more intense than that of nature.

"But little of the vast treasure was left for the ruthless hands of the invaders.

"In the course of the Spaniards' progress towards the city of the Incas, they had many sharp and serious encounters with the natives, but their armor, artillery and cavalry gave them the advantage.

"On the 15th of November, 1533, they entered the capital, when a terrible fight ensued, but they captured the city, and then eagerly sought for the vast treasures that induced them to attack Cuzco.

"The amount of gold they found was great to them, but only a tithe of what there had been, and as at Caxamalca, they were for the most part melted down into ingots and divided among the band.

"After stripping the palaces and temples of their treasure, Pizarro placed Manco, a son of the great Huayna Capac, on the throne of the Incas, and ignorant of the fact that he had missed getting most of their treasures, he marched west to the sea coast, and founded the city of Lima.

"The treasures of the island of Coricancha, in Lake Titicaca were never found by the invaders, and the refugees who people that district are banded under solemn oaths to Pachacamac, the Creator of the World, to defend to the last drop of blood in their veins, the last stronghold of the Incas."

Here the translation ended.

Jack then turned to Aljoe, and asked him:

"And you assert that you ventured to visit the island of Coricancha?"

"I will swear to it," replied the young man earnestly.

"And you saw the treasures mentioned in this paper?"

"More—much more. You can only get a faint idea from that description."

"To secure any of this treasure it would cost a severe battle?"

"Very likely, but the prize is worth contesting."

"How did you design to reach that island?"

"By entering the Amazon river, following it to its branch, the Madeira, and then by its fork, the Tuiche, which would bring me to a point north of Mount Sorata, in Bolivia, when a great ancient aqueduct leads it to the lake."

"Did you explore that region while you were there?"

"Every foot of it, as I recognized the importance of being well posted on the geography of the place were I to return, and try to get some of the gold."

"What do you think of this extraordinary paper?" Jack asked his two friends.

"I reckon as thar can't be much doubt o' its bein' genuine," said Tim.

"Und me neider," coincided Fritz, lighting his pipe and puffing at it.

"For my part, I have proven by comparison that it is real."

"Then what do you intend to do about it?" asked Aljoe, eagerly.

"If we venture this costly, adventurous and dangerous trip what do we get?"

"Equal shares in whatever we secure," promptly answered Aljoe.

"What say you, boys—shall we risk it?"

"Ay, ay lad."

"Fer sure."

"That settles it. We go. In one week from to-day, and if you wish, you may remain with us getting ready for the trip, Mr. Aljoe."

And shaking hands with the delighted Aljoe, they separated for the night.

CHAPTER III.

A WONDERFUL INVENTION.

JACK was not a bit surprised now that Pedro Durango had impressed Robin Hood into his service, to try so desperately to steal the Inca manuscript, for the rascal had evidence in the gold which he stole from the old Indian woman whom he killed that it lead to the source his plunder came from.

Oliver Aljoe kept the translation and left the original parchment in Jack's possession with its colored and knotted strings, so the boy could have the translation verified as proof of its truth.

The young inventor sent the scroll to a professor of languages in a noted college for this purpose, as he wanted complete evidence that there was no humbug about the matter.

Aljoe had decided to remain at the boy's house pending their departure.

He had saved considerable money during his absence in foreign countries, and therefore had ample means to procure a suitable outfit for his voyage with Jack to the Amazon.

The first day of his stay in Wrightstown was spent in securing everything he needed, and when this last was completed he told the boy he was ready to assist him in any way.

"I have nothing more to do except to stock the Typhoon with water and provisions," laughed the young inventor.

"Before I went to Washington my friends, Tim and Fritz,

and myself were very busy for a long time building the boat. She was completed before I went away and now is ready for use."

"Have you tried the boat yet?" asked Aljoe, curiously.

"Only in a desultory way. She seemed to work just as I designed. But this afternoon I am going to give her a trial in real earnest, as I have received a challenge for a race."

"A race! With whom?"

"It is a most singular race, as I am pitted to run against the best bicycle rider in the country, who made a mile in the extraordinary rapid time 1:58 3-5. He is to run along the straight shore road, starting from the pier at the head of the bay and ending just in back of yonder light-house standing on the bluff at the opening in the headland of the bay. The distance is just one mile. Besides this competitor I am to run against the lightning express train from New York, the tracks of which run beside of bicycle rider's road. On the road with the wheelman there will be the fastest trotting mare in the country, who broke the record by going a mile in 2.04, and in the water beside us I am to run against the steam yacht recently bought by the government which has beaten all comers."

Aljoe opened his eyes with amazement.

"Jerusalem!" he gasped. "The four fastest flyers in this country."

"Exactly," laughed Jack, "and I have hung out a purse of \$25,000, which I intend to give to any one of the owners of my four rivals if I am beaten in a one mile dash over the course I explained."

Jack's listener whistled.

"You don't mean it!" he gasped.

"But I do, as you will find out when you go with us."

"Then your new invention must be a marvel of speed."

"She was designed to beat everything I ever yet have contrived. That's the reason she was planned on the tricycle model, with ball-bearing wheels, which do away with the friction on ordinary axles."

"I have the utmost curiosity to see this wonder."

"You can do so. As your baggage has come, we will go aboard and you can then stow your things away. Come out to the shop."

They left the library by a side door, and crossing the garden, they passed in through a door in the work shop.

The great room on the ground floor contained a flooded basin, communicating by doors with the creek, and in this water there floated Jack's speedy marvel.

It was a peculiar looking boat, built entirely of the thinnest yet toughest steel, embellished here and there by polished brass work.

The boat was about one hundred feet long, twenty foot beam, and had a draft of only four feet.

The hull was cut down wedge shape, and was furnished along either side with several pipe ends, valve openings, and bull's-eyes.

Beneath there hung a semi-circular center-board which could be folded up like a fan, while under the down-cut stern was a rudder.

The deck was furnished with a turret like the pilot-house on a ferry-boat, in back of which ran a square deck-house, having a skylight, several valves on the roof, and four bull's-eyes on each side.

There was a door in the end of it, and another leading into the turret.

She was furnished with a search-light, at the side was her name, and a small portable flag pole on top bore Jack's private ensign.

On either side the boat was furnished with an enormous light water-wheel, looking like those of a tricycle, while a small one was attached to the extreme end of the stern of the hull.

Aljoe paused upon a metal footpath, surrounding the basin, to admire the peculiar-looking, yet gracefully built craft.

"By Jove, she's a queer concern," he muttered.

"All my inventions are," laughed Jack.

"But I don't see her smoke-stack."

"Nothing strange in that, as she works by electric storage batteries."

"Oh, I see! How many rooms does she contain?"

"Four, besides the pilot-house and the hold."

"Her free-board is only three feet."

"Exactly, but she will ride the waves like a cork, or sink like a stone."

"Sink?"

"Yes. She can navigate under water."

"Is that so?"

"But not more than about twenty hours. She ain't built particularly for under water work; she is too small to carry big reservoirs for air and ballast, as her hold only measures seven feet deep. But come aboard, and I'll show you how she looks inside."

The Typhoon, as the boat was named, was moored by ropes, and a gang-plank led from the footpath to her deck.

Leading his companion over to her galvanized deck, the boy opened the sternmost door and led Aljoe into a small metal closet, from which several tubes ran down below.

It was a water chamber, or exit, when the boat was submerged.

A water tight door led from this compartment into a store-room filled with diving suits of metal, arms and ammunition, a tank for carrying Croton water, and numerous lockers filled with ship's stores, provisions, chemicals for electric batteries, and various implements.

The adjoining room was a combined cooking and eating room, very handsomely furnished, and contained crockery lockers, electric heating apparatus for cooking, and every requisite for comfort and luxury.

Next to this was a state-room containing six curtained berths, running water in the marble wash basins, and a small library.

In front of it was a beautiful little cabin, containing the most elegant carpet, rugs, and furniture that money could buy.

A door from here led into the pilot-house.

This turret was about twelve feet in diameter, eight feet high, had a door on either side, and sliding windows of thick plate glass, over which metallic shutters could be drawn for protection.

Like the rest of the rooms, it was furnished with incandescent electric lamps, brass air-wheels and a fine carpet.

There was a rudder wheel, a binnacle, and a lever board for controlling all the electric arrangements on the boat, at the front of the room, while in a glass case at one side were arranged a variety of bells, registers, gauges, indicators, physiological and meteorological instruments and other needful contrivances.

Aljoe took everything in at a glance, and then observed a trap door in the floor, by means of which communication was had with the hold of the boat.

Jack then explained everything to him.

He was charmed with the methodical arrangement of everything and delighted with the elegance of his surroundings.

"Why, it's a regular floating palace!" he remarked, "and yet I see that, although everything is constructed with elegance, there is a latent strength about the whole construction that must be very great. Just see how massive that framework is!"

"Heavy as it looks," laughed Jack, "it might surprise you to learn that it is considerably lighter than anything else in the boat."

"I don't see how you make that out."

"Very easily. The skeleton is made of aluminum, a metal very much stronger and lighter than steel," replied Jack.

"Ah, yes; I never heard of that stuff before."

"If you will come down below I'll show you how she works," said Jack, as he raised the trap-door in the floor.

A metallic staircase was disclosed.

The boy descended, and at the bottom pressed a button in the wall, when four electric lights blazed out and dispelled the gloom.

By these lights Aljoe beheld a small square room six feet deep.

There were rows of brackets, ranged one above the other, from floor to ceiling on either side of this compartment, and each one contained a row of accumulator jars made of gutta percha.

They were arranged in different series, forming powerful batteries that worked all parts of the boat that were active.

In the middle of the room was a small pony dynamo, and a smaller oil engine to charge the batteries when it became necessary.

A shaft ran through the cross section of the boat with a small wheel in the middle of it, on the ends of which the driving-wheels were fastened, while an eccentric rod ran through the chamber to revolve the sternmost wheel, the eccentric working on the main shaft.

Hanging from the ceiling over the wheel in the middle of the shaft was a very large electro magnet, wound with covered wire.

There were three armatures on the shaft wheel of soft iron, placed at right angles with the plane of the wheel.

On the right-hand side of the wheel and upon its shaft was a break piece consisting of a large metallic disc, from which projected, in a lateral direction, three iron pins corresponding with the three iron armatures.

The battery current from the accumulator jars was brought to a binding post at the foot of the magnet, and divided into two branches, descending each leg of the electro magnet. Then ascending the two branches united and descended by a single wire to the break piece.

Thence it passed, whenever one of the three iron pins was in contact with a silver spring in which the wire terminated, into the shaft of the wheel, and so, by two brass supports, into the iron ~~core of the magnet~~, finding its way into another binding post where it made its final exit.

The silver spring was arranged in such a way as to come in contact with each iron pin the moment when the corresponding armature was within a quarter-revolution of the poles of the electro magnet, and to cease its contact the instant each armature was brought directly over the poles.

As soon as contact between the pin and the spring took place the current passed, the magnet was excited and the armature was forcibly attracted toward the poles. As soon as it reached them, contact was broken, the current ceased and the magnet lost its power.

But the wheel continued its revolution on account of the momentum it had acquired until the pin of the second armature came in contact with the break piece, when the magnet became charged again the second armature was attracted, contact was again broken, and by these rapid and successive attractions a swift rotary motion was acquired by the wheel as long as the current went on circulating.

The revolutions of the wheel turned the shaft, and the shaft turned the paddle wheels in rapidity proportioned to the amount of current put on.

As the eccentric worked from the shaft by a mechanism of its own it revolved the small wheel astern, and thus the motive power was produced.

Having shown this to Aljoe, the young inventor pointed at a small but very powerful pump standing near, and said:

"By means of a belt I can put that pump to work with the magnet, independent of the shaft, and use it to compress air into the reservoirs, or pump water in or out of the chamber running between the keel and the floor we are standing on."

"Do you mean for submersion?"

"Yes. In the bow and stern are situated the air chambers. When I wish to descend I set the pump working. The air in the water chamber is compressed into its own reservoirs, and I open the sea valves and let in enough brine to overcome the buoyancy of the confined air."

"And how do you ascend?"

"Pump out the water and let the atmosphere expand in the water chamber."

"Then you use the compressed air for breathing purposes as well?"

"Of course, when submerged. Automatic injectors will distribute it to us."

"And when it is vitiated by breathing?"

"There are automatic sprays of a solution of water, quicklime and potash provided through the rooms to keep it pure. The heavy carbonic acid thrown off from our breathing will escape by valves into the sea."

Jack showed him the air chambers and ballast reservoir, and they left the hold.

Having stowed away his possessions, he went ashore with the boy.

The race was to take place that afternoon at three o'clock, and promptly at that hour the four boarded the boat and brought her out into the creek.

Thousands of people were flocking to the bay from all directions, and the shore was then lined with them and all sorts of vehicles, while the water was dotted with innumerable boats filled with men, women and children.

Jack and his friends wore navy-blue uniforms and jaunty caps.

The boy had charge of the wheel, and pulling one of the levers, he put the magnet in operation, the three wheels revolved, and the boat started.

Down the creek she glided, and out on the bay she passed.

The moment she appeared a tremendous cheer burst from the multitude in the boats and on the shore, and the Typhoon then glided through the water toward the pier from whence she was to start on her race against the fastest known flyers.

CHAPTER IV.

A MILE A MINUTE.

UPON mooring the Typhon alongside of the dock, Jack went ashore.

Ropes and a squad of policemen held the crowd back from thronging out on the pier, which had been reserved for the racers.

A committee of the leading citizens of the village, the bicycle-rider, the horse-trainer, and the captain of the steam yacht were gathered on the dock when Jack appeared, and they all greeted the young inventor most cordially.

They eyed the new invention with curious glances, commented upon its peculiar appearance, and when Jack had explained the advantages of the boat as a racing machine, he glanced at his watch and said:

"We have got fifteen minutes yet before the express train comes along. The engineer will stop at the switch-brake on a line with the pier for one minute, as no flying starts are allowed."

"Who is to act as a starter?" asked one of the committee men.

"I am to fire off a pistol as the signal to go," replied the local justice.

"Have you got an official time keeper?" queried the wheelman.

"I will see to that," answered the post-master, who had a stop watch.

"Has the course been staked?" asked the horse driver.

"Look along the shore," replied Jack. "Each quarter mile is staked off."

"I suppose the course is free of obstructions?" asked the steam yacht captain.

"There isn't a rock within thirty feet of the surface in the bay," replied the boy.

"You had better get ready now, gentlemen," said the referee, just then.

"Very well," answered Jack. "Here is my check—the prize I have offered."

They handed it over to the referee who said:

"I shall give it to the one who reaches the stake boat first."

Then he and two of the committee men embarked on a naphtha launch, and ran out to the buoy marking one mile from the pier.

Returning to the Typhoon the young inventor told his friends what to do, and assumed control of his boat.

The steamboat captain stationed himself on his vessel, the wheelman got his bicycle ready, and the driver mounted the seat of a pneumatic-tired ball-bearing sulky in readiness to let his mare out.

A yell went up from the anxious thousands who were thronging around the bay when they saw these preparations made for a start, for many of them had come a great distance to witness the contest.

Fritz went down below and examined the batteries and machinery to see that they were in proper working order, and Jack glanced over at the railroad track and saw the express train approaching.

A few minutes afterwards the train reached the switch brake and paused.

Now a breathless interest fell upon the spectators.

A most intense stillness prevailed.

Every one was nervous and excited by the suspense, and every one freely discussed the merits of the different participants in the race.

"With a flying start the train can go a mile a minute," said one of the onlookers. "Next, the bicycle record of 1.58 3-5 can be repeated, then the mare can go in 2.04, the steam yacht can go in three minutes, and here we've got Jack Wright's new invention, as yet untested for speed, except for several short dashes up and down the creek."

"Her record wasn't taken, was it?" asked another individual.

"Some say it took her 1.30 to score half a mile."

"Then she won't be in it."

"I'm afraid not. See what she's bucking against."

"How's the wind and tide?"

"Tide's running out, and wind from the west."

"But that ought to favor the boats."

"Of course—and the locomotive, mare, and wheel as well."

This was a sample of the general conversation.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?" demanded the starter, presently.

Each of the racers nodded, and the wheelman mounted his bicycle.

The starter raised his revolver.

Bang!

It was the signal to go.

Hardly was it fired when the racers were off like the wind, and a tremendous cheer burst from the spectators.

Everyone eagerly bent forward to watch the result.

Jack was as cool as an iceberg as he managed his boat.

He pulled the starting lever half way, the big wheels spun around under half power, and he aimed the prow of his boat straight for the stake boat and kept his glance roving occasionally to the indicators.

The steam yacht flashed by him and the bicycle passed the yacht, while the locomotive and mare rushed along together about even with him, each of them gradually increasing their speed.

For a few seconds the tricycle boat was left behind.

The bicycle reached the first quarter post first, followed closely by the flying locomotive, the mare lagging behind, and the yacht fast closing up the gap between her prow and the animal.

Jack glanced at the chronometer.

It registered just twenty-two seconds.

His boat was last in the race so far.

"Shiver me, lad, we're bent already," gasped Tim, nervously.

"Wait," said Jack, smilingly, as he pulled the lever further.

Faster flew the paddle wheels, and the boat darted ahead quicker.

She caught up with the steam yacht at the half mile post, and the chronometer registered forty-two seconds since the start.

It was a gain of two seconds for the Typhoon.

On the way to the three-quarter post Jack's boat passed the mare and came abreast of the locomotive.

As soon as the spectators saw this they uttered a salvo of cheers.

"Hurrah! hurrah! the Typhoon is gaining."

"It took just eighteen seconds to go that quarter."

It was now one minute since they started, and they were going along the stretch like whirlwinds toward the stake boat.

The bicycle was in the lead, and the Typhoon gaining on it.

By the time half the distance was covered, the electric boat reached the wheelman and shot swiftly past him.

The shouts from the spectators that greeted this gain, sounded like rumbling thunder around the shore of the bay.

A stream of spray was hissing at the cut water of the Typhoon, her stern was buried to the deck in the swell that rolled after her, the flying water-wheels flung the brine in showers all over the boat, and she went over the rollers like a cork.

Her work was simply marvelous.

Every one on shore went wild over her.

Jack now pulled the lever all the way, putting on full power, when the wheels fairly shrieked, the magnet emitted a loud crackling noise, and the boat went ahead very much faster.

The bicycle rider was straining every muscle to keep up with the boat, but rapidly dropped astern, and the train passed him, while the steam yacht and the mare fell far back and were virtually out of the contest.

"I'm sorry for that wheelman—he did splendidly," said Jack.

"This boat is a wonder!" exclaimed Aljoe, enthusiastically.

"*Donner und blitzen!* Loog oudt for der stakes poat!" gasped Fritz.

The Typhoon was rushing headlong upon the naphtha launch, and Jack gave his wheel a turn.

Aside swept the electric boat just in time.

The next moment she passed the launch.

"Victory!" cried Jack.

"A quarter in fifteen seconds!" commented Aljoe.

"Dot's a mile in 1.35," said Fritz.

"Hurrah for us!" Tim yelled, delightedly. "Three cheers, my hearties!"

They cheered with a will.

It was taken up by the spectators with a roar that arose to the skies, for the boy's new electric boat had given them a surprise.

She could go a mile a minute; of that there was no doubt.

Jack then rounded the stake boat, and drove the Typhoon back to the dock.

When the Typhoon reached the pier, the shouts of the spectators were deafening; handkerchiefs were waved to the victorious crew, flags were raised on ships and shore, and everybody was jubilant over the wonderful exhibition made by the boat.

Awaiting the return of the bicycle, yacht and mare, Jack joined the managers on the pier, and shook hands with them.

"I've beat you fairly and squarely, gentlemen," said the boy, "and sorry as I am to have you lose, I can't help feeling overjoyed at defeating you. Still, you shall not have your labor for nothing."

"How do you mean?" questioned the cyclist.

"How does the record stand?" asked Jack of the time-keeper.

"Typhoon, 1.15," read that individual from his score-book; "the locomotive, 1.24 1-2; the bicycle, 1.58 1-4; the mare, 2.04 1-8, and the yacht, 2.55."

"Wonderful records," commented Jack, "for a standing start. At all events, as I have won back my own purse, I don't intend to take it. I authorize you, sir, to cash the check and divide the money in the following proportions: To the engineer of the train, \$10,000; to the bicyclist, \$5,009; to the horse driver, \$5,000, and the remaining \$5,000 to the captain of the yacht."

Everybody was astounded at this magnificent gift.

It was very evident to every one that the boy possessed a tremendous fortune to thus deliberately give away so much money.

Moreover, it showed a most generous disposition on Jack's part, and a strong partiality for the maintenance of sports.

Before they could recover from their amazement and enter a word, the boy returned to the Typhoon smilingly, passed into the pilot-house and started her for the creek.

The story of the boy's generous gift spread like wild fire among the spectators, and as the boat was passing them they cheered the young inventor in such enthusiastic and extravagant a manner that it sent a thrill through him.

CHAPTER V.

THE WORK OF A THIEF.

UPON returning the Typhoon to the workshop, Jack found that she had not been strained, or injured in the least, as the metal frame in the bow had been built very stiff, and strongly stood the resistance to which the forward part of the boat was put.

They left her moored in the basin, and returned to the house, where a sumptuous supper was prepared for them.

During the course of the meal, the mail came in, and among the letters for Jack, there was one for Oliver Aljoe, which came from New York.

Surprised at the receipt of this communication, as he had not told any one in the metropolis that he was in Wrightstown, the young man opened the envelope, and read the following letter:

NEW YORK, November, 15, 18—.

MR. OLIVER ALJOE:—I have been apprised of your address in Wrightstown by Mr. Pedro Durango, who recently called upon me, and made me an offer similar to the one you advanced—namely, to equip a vessel for a cruise to Peru, in search of an alleged treasure of the Incas. Mr. Durango also claims to know where this treasure lies buried, and has made me an offer in excess of yours. He will put up \$10,000 for the charter. If you wish to compete with him, you may have the privilege of doing so before I close with him. The ship, Blue Jacket, being especially adapted by its light draught, to navigating the Amazon, is just the craft you need, and I doubt if you could secure a vessel for more moderate terms than the one I have to charter. If I do not hear from you by Saturday, the 16th, the boat goes to Durango.

Yours truly,

ARTHUR WOODS.

Aljoe uttered a whistle.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "Here's a go"

"What's the trouble?" questioned Jack.

"Durango knows I'm in Wrightstown."

"Then he must have seen us coming here."

"Just what I imagine. Besides that he claims to know where the Inca's treasure lies, and has been making overtures to a ship owner whom I approached on the night you caught him trying to rob me. He wants the very craft I tried to secure. Just read this letter."

He handed it over to Jack.

"You have no use for his boat now," said the boy.

"No, but it shows us that Durango means to start off after the treasure himself, and that we will have a rival in him."

"I'm afraid he has gained an inkling of our course," said Jack.

"But he don't know where the treasure is. I never told anybody."

"Still you have given yourself away to him."

"I don't see how."

"Why, it is very plain. You told the ship owner that you wanted a vessel to navigate to the headwaters of the Maracaibo river in quest of an Inca treasure, didn't you?"

"Yes. But that is all I did divulge. What of it?"

"This much. Durango must have known your object at the ship owner's, and called on him, pumped him about what you said, and thus found out where you intended to go. Thus apprised he must have offered to take the ship you wanted, and intends very likely to follow the course you so innocently mapped out for the ship owner, as soon as he finds you starting for the same place. By watching you on the river, he expects you to lead him to the place where the treasure is."

Aljoe gave a violent start.

The reasoning Jack advanced was very plausible.

"I am afraid I unwittingly have betrayed myself to my enemy," he exclaimed, with a troubled look. "What a fool I was."

"Then you think my theory is right?"

"I do. I hope it won't get us in trouble."

"Don't alarm yourself. You have seen how fast the Typhoon can travel. It will be a very easy matter for us to run away from the fastest ship Durango could charter, and reach our destination long before he does, so he can't see where we go.

Of course he may reach the river, and either follow us, or lay in wait to tackle us when we return, in hopes of wresting the treasure from us. But if we maintain a fair degree of caution it will be an easy matter for us to escape him."

"Well, I'll send a dispatch to the shipowner," said Aljoe, rising from the table. "I may throw Durango off the track by telegraphing that I have engaged a vessel and do not intend to start until the first of next month. That may delay Durango's start and give us a big lead on the scoundrel."

"It won't hurt to try it," admitted Jack, "but I don't think we can gain much by such a move in the game. Knowing where you are, your enemy will doubtless keep a sharp watch upon your movements and know just what you are doing."

Aljoe was not sure of this.

So he put on his hat and went out.

Night had fallen dark and cloudy, and a dense sea fog had come in from the ocean, and lay like a pall on the village.

The young man made his way through the almost deserted streets toward the telegraph station in the railroad depot.

He did not observe that he was followed from the moment he went out until he reached the telegraph station, by a man whose coat collar was turned up around his ears, and his slouched hat was pulled down over his eyes to conceal his features.

Aljoe inscribed a message to the shipowner and sent it.

Then he strode down the platform toward several freight cars that were side-tracked just above the station, intending to return to Jack's house.

But he had no sooner reached the side of the cars when the man who had been following him appeared from behind a water tank and rushed swiftly and silently up behind him.

The soft patter of his footfalls suddenly reached Aljoe's ears, and the young man turned his head to see who was coming, when the rascal dealt him a blow with a sand-bag.

Uttering a deep groan, Aljoe fell to the ground, senseless.

The next moment his assailant bent over him and began to eagerly rifle his pockets.

One of the first things he produced was the translation of the Inca manuscript, describing the location of the treasure.

A half suppressed exclamation of "Carramba!" escaped the man's lips as he glared at the paper by the dull, faint light of a lantern on the depot platform.

"It is ze wong zat I want!" he muttered, delightedly, with a broad Mexican accent to his words. "Ave Maria! Zis is

very good luck. Now, Oliver Aljoe, I sink zat I will not have very much trouble to find out where is ze treasure of ze Incas. It is a race between us. I shall win!"

He saw the station-master come out of the baggage-room, and, with a startled look upon his face, he dashed away, darted in between two cars, and lurked there until a train for New York came.

Swiftly boarding it, unseen, he was carried away.

By the lights shining from the windows of the passing cars, the station agent beheld Aljoe's recumbent form.

With a startled expression, he rushed over to the unconscious man with his signal lantern, and knelt down beside him.

A quick examination showed him that Aljoe was knocked senseless, and he half carried and half dragged him along the platform into the passengers' waiting-room and laid him on a bench.

"He has met with an accident," hurriedly said the man to the surprised telegraph operator. "I found him outside by the freight cars. Get me some water till I try to revive him."

"He's the man who just sent a message to New York," said the operator, as he complied.

"Do you know who he is, or where he lives?" queried the station agent, as he bathed Aljoe's head with the water.

"In sending messages, people are asked their address you know, and this man told me he was stopping at Jack Wright's house."

"Then he must be a friend of the young inventor."

"Very likely. I saw them come from New York together, and as the local paper said this morning, that Oliver Aljoe was a guest of the young inventor's, it's likely he's the man, for that was the name he signed to the message he just sent."

"Ah—here's where he hurt his head. Feel that big lump."

"Queer, isn't it. And see—his pockets are turned inside out."

"Good Lord! This must have been the work of a thief."

Just then the senseless man uttered a suppressed groan, and showed unmistakable signs of returning consciousness.

In fact, a few minutes afterwards he opened his eyes and sat up, stared blankly around, and tried to get upon his feet.

"Where is he? Where is he?" he cried, as it suddenly dawned upon his mind that he had seen his assailant, just as the rascal was in the act of striking him down.

"There, there! Don't excite yourself. You are safe, sir," cheerily replied the station master. "You are among friends."

Aljoe became calm again, gradually came to a realization of his surroundings, and remembered what had occurred.

He had a splitting headache, and was as pale as death from the blow he received, but otherwise was not much injured.

"I was attacked," he exclaimed. "Did you see it done?"

"No. I just found you lying senseless near the freight cars."

"But I saw my assailant and recognized him. He was Pedro Durango."

"An enemy of yours, I presume?"

"Yes—a deadly foe."

"Do you know that your pockets are turned inside out?"

Aljoe started, and glanced down at them.

"He has robbed me!" he gasped, becoming violently agitated.

Then he searched his pockets and uttered a groan.

For he found that Durango had stolen the translation.

Having no desire to impart any information to these two men about his private business, he thanked them for what they did and went home.

Here he told Jack, Tim and Fritz what had happened to him.

"How unfortunate!" exclaimed the boy in deep chagrin.

"The rascal by this time knows as much about the treasure as we do. Very likely he will start off at once to get it; so, you see, your telegram was useless."

"He must have been lurking about Wrightstown watching my movements," said Aljoe. "Now, the best thing we can do to thwart him will be to start off as soon as possible."

"By to-morrow night we can have the boat ready," said Jack, "and on the following night we will depart."

Thus the matter was settled.

Our friends did not suffer much from the loss of the stolen paper, however, for on the following day the mail brought in the original manuscript, which Jack had posted to the college professor for verification, and the boy saw that the translation was correct.

With this point proven, any doubts that might have lingered in Jack's mind relating to the genuineness of the parchment were banished.

He spent the day equipping the electric boat for her cruise and a portion of the following day arranging his business affairs.

When night fell, under cover of the darkness the four embarked on the Typhoon and submerged her in the creek, taking the monkey and the parrot with them, fastened in two cages.

Buried several feet, she ran out on the bay.

Her departure was thus unseen and kept a secret so that their enemies would know nothing of their movements.

She reached the headland, and passing out on the heaving ocean, Jack pointed her prow to the southward and her voyage in search of the treasure of the sun worshipers was commenced.

CHAPTER VI.

CAUGHT IN THE FLOOD.

"STOP ther boat, Jack, or she is lost!"

"For heaven's sake, Tim, what have we run into?"

"It's a herd o' manatees, my lad, an' they'll break her to pieces."

Two weeks after the Typhoon left Wrightstown bay, she had reached a point on the South American coast, off Guiana, midway between Cape Orange and Oyapok, after an uneventful voyage.

It was about mid-day when the foregoing dialogue occurred, the sun blazing down upon a smooth sea from the cloudless sky.

Jack was at the wheel, and Tim stood in the bow of the electric boat on lookout, when up from the depths all around the Typhoon there rose a herd of over a score of ugly manatees.

These creatures, generally very harmless, inhabit the shores off which the boat then rode, feeding on algae and aquatic plants, attain a length of fifteen feet, resemble a whale, and support themselves in a semi-erect position.

The Typhoon came to a sudden pause in the midst of the herd, and the great, clumsy monsters swam around her on all sides, disporting themselves like so many romping children at play.

Several of them came flying along on either side of the boat with irresistible force, and their dark bodies grazing the hull and driving wheels, caused the Typhoon to shake like an aspen.

Flitting about in all directions, so near the boat of which they were not in the least timid, there was every chance of an unlucky blow from their hulking bodies breaking the pointers of the wheels, crushing the slender rudder, or creating some other mischief.

Jack quickly saw the peril to which they were exposed, and quick to act, he rushed back into the store room and dragged a singular looking contrivance out upon the deck.

It was a gun, capable of firing six hundred shots a minute, and carried a magazine containing a thousand cartridges.

The bullets in this ammunition were hollowed, and filled with a high explosive called horrorite, of Jack's invention, which would explode after they struck the object aimed at, like a bomb.

The gun stood on a carriage, and all that was required to operate it was to pull the trigger to explode the first cart-

ridge, after which it loaded itself and fired itself by a complex mechanism as long as the cartridges lasted.

Jack aimed it at the manatees and started it going, when a noise arose not unlike a pack of big firecrackers going off, the reports of the cartridges being echoed instantly by the bursting bullets whenever they struck.

Although the manatees had skins as thick and tough as rhinoceroses, the projectiles were discharged with terrific force that caused them to penetrate the bodies of the creatures, and every time a bullet exploded in the beasts immense masses of their flesh were torn out.

Jack stood at the breech aiming the gun, which worked on a swivel, and as the destructive fire continued the herd rapidly dove down and swam away, until none were left but the dead.

The young inventor then stopped the firing.

Aljoe had come out and joined him while he was at work.

"That's a terrible weapon," he remarked, when the gun stopped firing.

"It is good for small game," replied Jack.

"Did you invent it?"

"Yes."

"I never saw anything like it before."

"Oh, it's a very simple contrivance."

"But I can't understand the thing."

"It consists of a barrel encased in a metal jacket," said Jack. "By each discharge water is automatically injected into the jacket to prevent overheating the barrel. The remaining third is surrounded by a steel case of rectangular shape, as you can see. The operating mechanism consists of a mainspring and tumbler, the firing pin and a lever inclosed in a steel case. When the gun is fired the recoil puts the lever in action, and the whole mechanism is at once in motion. The empty shells are automatically withdrawn, new cartridges inserted, the breech closed, the cartridge fired, and a certain amount of water is injected into the jacket. This belt holds the cartridges, and as it is introduced into the breech of the casings it moves automatically onward, like cloth in the flanges of a sewing machine. The recoil is only one-eighth of an inch, but six hundred shots can be fired in a minute, making an average of ten per second. The heat evaporates the water in the jacket, and the vapor escapes through a hole, a graduated quadrant permits the gun to swing in any desired direction, and the accuracy of the piece is perfect."

By the time Jack finished his description, there wasn't a manatee left.

Tim and Fritz joined them.

"Ve look over eferydings on de poat," said the Dutch boy, "und ve don't could find nodings proken, Shack."

"It was a narrow escape then," replied the boy.

"Ay, lad!" assented Tim, "but nuthin' ter what once happened ter me when I wuz aboard o' ther ole frigate Wabash, in the navy."

"Ach Gott!" groaned Fritz, running away, "here coom vun ouf his lies."

Tim glared after the fat boy with his good eye, and growled:

"If yer'd stayed, I'd a stove in yer top riggin' yer lubber!"

"To what were you referring?" asked Aljoe, curiously.

"Why," replied Tim, glancing at the young man, "yer see, we wuz under full sail aheadin' fer the banks of Newfoundland, when suddenly thar came a terrible bang under the ship, an' she parted her anchor cable, an' begun ter drift away to leeward——"

"Didn't you say she was under full sail?" asked Aljoe.

"Ay!" assented Tim, with a perplexed look.

"Then how could she be at anchor?"

"I meant ter say as she wuz roidin' at anchor, gittin' ready ter sail."

"Oh, that's different. Going inside, Jack?"

"Yes," replied the boy, anxious to escape the yarn.

"I'll go with you——"

"Haul to thar!" interposed Tim, grabbing him.

"What for?" asked Aljoe in surprise.

"Didn't I start ter spin yer a yarn?"

"Oh, yes—so you did. Well, go on with it."

There was no escape for him, and Jack hurried away laughing.

"Whar did I leave off?" asked Tim, giving a hitch at his pants.

"You said the cable parted."

"Ay, now. Waal, sir, off drifted ther frigate an' we thought as ther cable had busted. But instead o' that, wot should we see but that a big whale had took ther anchor for a fish hook an' swallowed it."

"Without any bait?"

"I reckon so. Anyway ther lubber took fright an' off it went under water about five fathoms an' towed ther ship along like lightnin'."

"Whales don't travel much faster than four miles an hour, Tim."

"Never mind," coolly replied the old fellow, taking a chew of plug. "Away we wuz towed straight towards two icebergs wot wuz a-sailin' together. We knowed that the minute we got atween 'em they'd collide an' smash ther frigate ter pieces. In a few minutes we wuz in a cable's length of 'em. Every one wuz panic-stricken but me! We're lost," ses ther commander. "Not while I kin save ther ship," ses I, "an' wi' that I grabs my knife an' dives overboard. Down I went till I reached ther whale, an' grabbin' him by ther fluke I stabs him an' he throwed up ther anchor jist in time fer ther quartermaster ter bring ther frigate about an' escape ther bergs."

"You said the whale was five fathoms under the sea, didn't you, Tim?"

"Six, I reckons, my hearty, for I found it so when I went under."

"That's thirty-six feet deep. A pretty good dive, Tim."

"Oh, I'm a corker fer divin'," replied the old fellow, with a grin.

"I should think so. But it don't wash."

"Wot! Don't yer b'lieve my yarn?" indignantly asked Tim.

"Oh, it was slightly exaggerated, that's all," replied Aljoe, with delicacy.

The old liar gave a grunt of disgust and stumped away wondering whether the laughing Aljoe swallowed any of his yarn or not.

Jack resumed his post at the wheel and started the boat off again, and she ran along down the coast and passed Oyapok.

From there to the mouth of the Amazon was a little over two hundred miles, and as she was making twenty knots an hour she reached the great river at ten o'clock that night.

"The biggest river in the world," remarked Jack, when he saw it in the moonlight. "It is 400 miles long, 50 fathoms deep in parts, and is navigable for most vessels up to Borja, on the Marañon, while the velocity of the water is two and a half miles an hour. At some distance below Jaen it is 850 feet wide, while between the Negro and Maderia tributaries it is a league wide."

The main mouth was fifty miles wide above the island of Caviana, but the whole delta, including the Para mouth and the island of Joannes was nearly two hundred miles from shore to shore.

By midnight the Typhoon was well into the wonderful river.

It was then three days before the new and full moons, the period when a curious tidal phenomena called the *proroca* was to occur.

Ignorant of the appalling danger threatening them, the four inmates of the boat were on the deck, taking in the strange scene.

This peril was owing to the fact that the sea, instead of occupying six hours to reach its flood, swells to its highest limit in from one to two minutes, with disastrous effect.

The first intimation they had of their danger was when

they heard the noise of the terrible flood five or six miles off, rapidly increasing in volume as it approached.

Presently they saw a liquid mass fifteen feet high, followed by another, and another, and a fourth, come rushing up the river.

The watery mountains spread across the whole channel, advanced with prodigious rapidity, rending and crushing everything in their way, boiling, hissing and roaring furiously.

Immense trees were uprooted by it, vast tracts of land on either shore were swept away, and as the fearful current leaped toward the boat, it threatened to destroy it.

Jack made a rush for the pilot-house, but no sooner had he got in, when the wall of savage waters engulfed the boat, and the rest of the crew on deck were buried in the brine.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE AMAZON.

A TERRIBLE scene followed the plunge of the maddened waters over the boat.

Fritz, Aljoe and Tim had no time to follow the young inventor into the pilot-house when the boat was overwhelmed.

The best they could do was to seize hold of the brass hand-rails running along the outside of the deck-house and hang on for their lives, and in a moment they were engulfed.

Buried with the boat in the wall of water, they were nearly strangled, but hung on with all their might, well knowing that the moment they let go their chances for life were very slim.

Carried along as if by an avalanche, the boat and its crew were swept up the river amongst the debris that had been torn from the shores, its hull bobbing up on the surface at one moment, then whirling over, turned upside down, or was totally submerged.

In this manner mile after mile was passed over, an appalling roar pealing out from the angry waters, and the amount of debris it gathered up momentarily increasing.

The unfortunates on deck underwent a terrible battle for their lives, as there was a strength and power opposed to them over which mankind really has but little control.

Fritz was rapidly weakening.

He was half drowned.

A huge log bounded from the spray and struck him.

With a gurgling cry he was knocked from his hold upon the hand-rail and the next moment his body was carried away.

Unaware of his fate, Aljoe was making an effort to drag himself over to the sternmost door of the boat, when the turbulent wave burst over the Typhoon again.

He, too, was forced to let go.

In a moment he was swallowed up in the surge, a cry of despair pealing from his lips.

Tim alone hung on, gallantly resisting every effort of the proroca to tear him from his grip, and Jack, in the pilot-house, could only cling to the wheel, utterly helpless and wild with anxiety over the probable fate of his friends outside.

It was impossible to see them.

Mile after mile was thus covered.

But a fortunate accident soon happened.

One of the anchors became loosened and fell overboard; its fluke caught the bottom, after dragging a ways, and the Typhoon presently came to a dead stop.

For several minutes she laid on the surface with her bow to the flood and tons of water breaching over her.

Then the proroca passed.

The river became as calm as a mill pond.

A tremendously high tide was flooding the shores, but the danger was over and Tim regained his faculties, glanced around in quest of Fritz and Aljoe, and seeing that they were missing he came to the conclusion that they were lost.

Filled with horror, drenched to the skin and trembling from exhaustion, the old sailor crept up to the pilot-house and found Jack lying prone on the floor, half buried under a mass

of loose articles which had been flung about the place by the agitation and overturning of the boat.

The boy was senseless.

With a woeful look upon his rugged face, Tim started in to revive the young inventor, and finally succeeded.

Jack had fallen victim to a blow on the head from a flying missile, but beyond a bruise escaped unhurt.

The monkey and parrot were yelling with fright in their cages, and everything in the place was knocked topsy-turvy.

It was some time before the boy or sailor could speak, so overwhelmed were they by the misfortune which had befallen them.

As soon as Jack recovered himself, however, he asked:

"What has become of Fritz and Aljoe?"

"Didn't they come inside, Jack?"

"No. I was alone."

"Then they're gone."

"Gone!"

"Ay, ay. They must be overboard."

"Good heaven! I hope they were not lost."

"I'm afeerd as they is," replied Tim.

"Search the boat for them till we see."

They followed this suggestion, but of course saw nothing of them.

Convinced that the two were swept away by the tide, they glanced at each other in dismay, and the boy finally said:

"I'm afraid you are right, Tim."

"Mebbe they're alive yet."

"If they are we must find them."

"Werry good. I'll change my clothes an' we'll hunt fer 'em."

"I never want to get caught in such a tide again, Tim."

"Lordy no. I wonder wot caused it?"

"A phenomena of nature. I've heard about it before."

"Is it wot they calls a bore?"

"Yes—in some places. Here it is called a proroca."

They both put on dry clothing, and examining the boat they found that she was dented and scratched, but none of the machinery was injured, although many loose articles were broken.

The anchor was raised, and while Jack was driving the Typhoon down the river, Tim straightened everything out.

Going out on deck when this was done, the old sailor took up his station in the bow, and scanned the shores on either side, upon which Jack was pouring the beams of the search-light.

Despite every effort they made, nothing was seen of Fritz or Aljoe, and the night waned, and the break of day found them back to the mouth of the river again.

Tired out they finally anchored the boat and turned in.

It was noon time when they aroused themselves, and after partaking of a luncheon Tim prepared, they got the boat in motion again, and run slowly up the river once more.

The Typhon hugged the southern shore this time, and the two inmates kept a sharp lookout for the missing pair.

In this manner the day passed uneventfully away, and the sun began to decline when they found themselves back at the spot where the proroca had first overwhelmed them.

Both looked sad and dejected.

It seemed to them that their friends had perished.

"Thar ain't much use o' lookin' no further, my lad," said Tim at last, with a tearful look. "They must a-been drowned."

"I won't give up the search till I find their bodies then," said Jack, resolutely. "If they got ashore it would very likely be on this side, as we were nearest to the south side when the tide carried us along."

"Then I takes it as ye reckons as they're on dry land?"

"I intend to keep on thinking so until it is proven beyond a doubt that they are dead," answered the boy.

"We'd oughter seen somethin' o' them long afore this then."

"You cannot tell. Who knows what may have happened to prevent them letting us know they yet live."

"That's hopeful, but I ain't got no faith in it," said Tim, sighing.

Jack did not reply.

He saw that Tim had the blues.

The old fellow in that state could see nothing bright ahead of him.

On drifted the boat along the big river, and a ship went by and passed on out to sea on the other side.

They were in a region thickly covered with lofty forests which were the haunts of the jaguar, bear, panther and other wild animals, and were inhabited by numerous small tribes of savages, among some of whom the Spaniards and Portuguese had established missionaries.

The great river abounded with fish which were delicious eating, there were numerous turtles in the water, and large alligators were frequently seen stretched motionless in the mud like trunks of trees.

As Jack eyed the ugly saurians a shudder passed over him, for the impression had crossed his mind that his two friends might have fallen victims to the rapacity of these monsters.

The gloom of twilight fell upon the scene.

Shadows lengthened upon the water, and from the depths of the woods there emanated the yells of wild beasts, mingled with the cries of birds.

The boat had drifted slowly along until it came to a small promontory with a sandy shore, when suddenly there arose a cry in among the trees that startled Jack and Tim.

It was the unmistakable voice of a man.

And they recognized it as that of Aljoe.

"Help! Help!" came the wild, appealing cry.

It echoed hollowly over the silent water, and Jack suddenly steered the boat toward the shore, and cried, excitedly:

"Tim! Did you hear that?"

"It wuz Aljoe's voice!" gasped the old sailor.

"Then he's alive, but in danger."

"Lord deliver us. Wot kin we do ter help him?"

"I'll beach the boat, and we'll run ashore."

"An' I'll get our weapings while yer adoin' it, my lad."

Jack nodded, and steering the boat for the promontory he drove her prow upon the sand, and stopped her machinery.

The anchor was hove over, and Tim came in with their rifles when they both sprang ashore and started for the woods.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROBBED OF THE BOAT.

THE cries Jack heard came from the midst of a dense copse of woods across the sandy shore which bordered that part of the river, and the boy plunged in amid the foliage, followed by the old sailor.

Their way was beset by thick, trailing vines and dense shrubbery, but they forced a passage through, penetrating deeper into the woods and presently came out into a grove of stunted trees.

Here a most hideous sound greeted their ears.

It was made up of a terrific grunting and squealing, the patter of hundreds of hoofs, and a rustling of the long grass.

A moment afterward the boy saw Aljoe.

He was treed by a herd of peccaries.

These vicious little pigs numbered over a thousand.

Surrounding the base of the tree in the branches of which Aljoe had taken refuge, their wicked little eyes blazing, their long sharp tusks gleaming, and their efforts all aimed toward reaching the young man, the small monsters presented a most formidable sight.

The crashing of twigs and other sounds made by Jack and Tim when approaching had attracted their attention, and the first thing they knew the peccaries made a rush for them.

Seeing their overwhelming forces, Jack paused.

"Tim, go for a tree!" he yelled.

"Good Lord! they're a-bearin' down on us!" gasped the old sailor.

"Quick! run. If they reach us they'll tear us to pieces."

"Ay, I'm all right now," said Tim.

There was a tree close to him, and up he went.

Jack made a rush for another one.

Before he could gain it the peccaries reached him, and sweeping him off his feet, he fell to the ground.

In a moment the boy was being trampled by scores of the ugly little beasts, and several sharp twinges of pain darted through him, as he felt their needle-like tusks lacerate his skin.

He struggled to his feet, and with the peccaries butting his legs and ribboning his pants with their tusks, he grasped the tree nearest to him and began to climb up.

Furious over his escape, the peccaries rushed at the trunk, sprang up against it, and grunting and squealing, they made the most frantic efforts to reach him.

Up went the panting boy until he reached the branches.

Here he paused, straddling a bow.

In the meantime Tim had opened fire upon the peccaries, and shot after shot pealed from his rifle and struck the beasts.

As soon as Jack unslung his own weapon from his shoulder and discharged it, they began to run.

A panic was started among them, a terrific uproar arose and the peccaries scattered and began to rush off in all directions.

Jack and Tim kept on firing.

Dozens of the brutes were wounded, and many were killed.

Dashing away, as the carnage in their midst continued, they rapidly began to disappear amidst the surrounding shrubbery, leaving a score lying dead upon the ground.

In this manner they vanished.

Sending several parting shots after them, Jack and Tim then came down from their perches, and Aljoe met them.

He had come down from his tree, and rushing up to them he fervently shook hands with his friends.

His face was as pale as death, his clothing torn, and he looked as if he had passed through a trying ordeal.

"I am so glad to see you," he cried. "I feared that I would perish in these woods when the flood carried me ashore."

"Have you been here ever since the catastrophe?"

"Yes, living on the wild fruit and spring water, Wright."

"What has become of Fritz?"

"Is he gone too?"

"He was carried away the same time you was."

"Poor fellow. I have seen nothing of him."

"I hope he has not been lost."

"Oh, you cannot imagine the fearful position we were placed in."

"How did you get in trouble with the peccaries?"

"They came upon me in a drove while I was walking through the woods and I climbed up in that tree. This was several hours ago. I never expected help but cried out for aid on the impulse of the moment. You can imagine my surprise to see you coming."

"We were equally as amazed to hear you."

"Thar's perwision enough among them pigs' carcasses ter last us a month," said Tim. "S'posen we takes some o' them back ter ther Typhoon wi' us. Then we kin go on a-lookin' fer Fritz."

The old sailor felt terribly bad over the loss of his friend, and was anxious to keep on looking for him.

As Aljoe was hungry and fatigued he was only too anxious to go, so they each took a pair of the peccaries and started back for the shore.

It was a short distance away.

"Were you carried to land near here?" asked Jack of Aljoe.

"No; some distance further to the westward," was the reply.

"Injured?"

"Slightly."

"Fritz was a good swimmer."

"It wouldn't avail in that current."

"Still it shows that he stood a chance for life."

"Just see the embankments on each side of the stream there."

The water had flooded the shores for a great distance.

Reaching the point where they had left the boat they found it gone.

"Good Heaven, what has become of the Typhoon?"

These startling words from Jack made his companions jump.

"Did you leave her here?" queried Aljoe.

"Yes. Could the tide have carried her away?"

Just then Tim uttered a cry, and pointed up the stream.

"Thar she is now!" he exclaimed.

"She is in the hands of some savages!" exclaimed Jack.

There were a number of canoes being paddled on in advance of the electric boat, and she was fastened to them by lines, while all over her there swarmed a number of natives.

They were short, copper colored fellows who infested that region, low, brutal and savage in their instincts, and enemies to all white men.

It was very evident that when they found the boat beached, they had hauled her out into the stream, and made off with her, as there was no one on board to dispute possession.

The three friends stood watching the receding boat in disgust.

Jack soon recovered himself, however.

"We must not remain here idle!" he exclaimed hurriedly.

"Those fellows look hostile enough, and very likely would fight before they would give up their prize. After them, boys. We must tackle the thieves before they reach their village, and get a crowd around them whom it would be impossible for us to beat."

"How are yer agoin' ter act?" queried Tim, anxiously.

"We will have to run along the shore till we reach a point opposite the boat, then open fire upon them. If once we succeed in driving them away from the Typhoon, we may recover her."

"I am unarmed," said Aljoe.

"Then take my revolver," answered Jack, handing it over. "Keep your bodies screened by the shrubbery as much as you can, so they can't see how few are opposed to them. When I give the order to fire don't shoot to kill. I rely more upon our power to frighten them away than anything else. Now come on."

And so saying, away they dashed along the shore.

The boat was fully half a mile down the stream, but they caught up with it in about ten minutes, and then let several shots fly at the natives.

At the first shot, the natives looked down toward the shore, then ceased paddling and began an excited discussion in their own language, frequently pointing toward the river bank.

Soon the shots began to fly thick and fast.

This left no doubt in the minds of the dark fellows that they were the objects aimed at, as several of their number were wounded.

Assured of this, the most excited shouts pealed from their lips, and they immediately began to fire back several volleys of spears and arrows.

Then, to the chagrin of our friends, instead of abandoning the electric boat, they started to tow it across the river, and thus get out of range.

"If they reach the other side, we will be as bad off as ever!" said Jack, in despair. "Fire faster, boys—this won't do, by any means."

Bang! Bang! Bang! rattled the shots again.

The fray became hotter every moment, a number of the natives were hit, and they returned the fusillade with their weapons.

None of the whistling spears and arrows reached our friends, however, as they were safely protected behind the trunks of the neighboring trees.

It now became so hot for the natives that they sought for

a means of insuring their own safety from the flying bullets.

In order to get away as rapidly as possible, they cast off from the Typhoon, those on the boat entered the canoes and leaving her adrift on the river, they paddled away.

Sending several parting shots after them, Jack handed his rifle to Aljoe, and stripping off his coat and shoes, he said:

"I'm going to swim out to her. You guard me with this. There is no other way for us to recover the boat."

And so saying, Jack boldly plunged into the river and struck out.

He was a fine swimmer, and had but an eighth of a mile to go.

But unfortunately for Jack, not half of this distance from the shore had been covered, when suddenly the waters in back of him opened and several huge alligators appeared. The monsters had seen the boy and selected him for their prey.

CHAPTER IX.

A BRUSH WITH THE NATIVES.

"Look out, Jack, or you'll be devoured alive!"

It was Oliver Aljoe who yelled this warning to the young inventor.

A groan of horror pealed from Tim's lips when he saw the beasts.

Jack glanced back over his shoulder.

"Alligators!" he commented in tones of dismay.

He was startled but not frightened.

The boy knew the nature of the monsters that were coming on in pursuit of him, and realized the fact that he was placed at a great disadvantage, as they are wonderfully fast swimmers.

He counted four dark heads gliding along the surface of the water, and saw the electric boat fully three hundred feet away.

It was utterly impossible for him to reach it before the saurians would overtake him, and he yelled to his friends.

"Shoot them!"

"We might hit you!" replied Aljoe.

"Chance it! Fire—quick!"

"Ay, lad! Aljoe, you take ther last one on ther left."

As Tim said this, he and Aljoe raised their rifles as they stood on the river bank, and aiming at the brutes steadily, they fired.

The reports rang out loudly, and the escaping natives, thinking they were fired at, accelerated their speed in paddling.

Both marksmen were good shots, and struck their prey, killing two of the alligators in a twinkling.

This did not deter the foremost pair, for they were rapidly nearing the young inventor.

Jack was armed with a pneumatic revolver.

It worked much after the manner of his repeating gun, and upon observing what his friends had done, he flung himself upon his back, and while floating, he took aim at the nearest alligator and fired.

There came a thud of escaping air from the pistol, and a terrific explosion as the ball struck the mark and burst.

The top of the alligator's head was blown off and the creature sunk.

Before Jack had time to fire at the remaining beast it was within a yard of him, and as quick as a flash Jack sunk.

Down he went about ten feet, and the long body of the beast glided swiftly by over his head and continued on.

When Jack reached the surface his foe was a dozen feet away, and turning its entire body around to see what had become of him, as there is no neck joint to enable these creatures to turn their heads.

The boy shook the water from his face.

His pistol was not affected by being soaked.

Aiming at the beast he pulled the trigger, but missed the mark, and the alligator suddenly came rushing toward him again and Jack snapped the trigger.

The pistol did not discharge.

He had used his last bullet.

For a moment Jack was dismayed, for he was at the mercy of the alligator, but he shouted to his friends:

"Fire on it! My pistol is useless!"

Jack did not have time to say any more, for the beast was now so close to him that nothing but the greatest activity could save him from its appalling jaws.

He dove down again, going straight toward it, but as if the monster anticipated his plan, it went under the same moment Jack did, and opening his eyes he saw that they were going toward each other with alarming rapidity.

He just had time to switch off at an angle when the hard, scaly body of the beast swept past him so close, that when it brought its teeth together, they grazed his shoulder.

Up went Jack to the surface again, the alligator doing likewise, and they were then distantly separated.

Tim and Aljoe now poured several shots into the beast's head and it was killed.

"Are you all right," Jack? yelled the young man.

"Safe enough," replied the boy, cheerily. "Any more of them?"

"None in sight."

"Then I'll go on to the boat."

And Jack struck out once more, and soon reached the electric craft, got aboard, and glancing around, he saw that the natives had taken but very few things from the deck.

They could not get inside the boat, as the doors were fastened with spring latches, nor had they broken anything.

Jack felt a deep sense of relief over this.

He then entered the pilot house, and having grasped the wheel, he opened a window and turned on the electric power.

The native canoes by this time were half way across the river, going up stream, and while the boy was steering the boat toward his friends, he eyed the natives through a spy-glass.

To his astonishment, he now observed that they had a white prisoner lying in the bottom of one of the boats, and a second glance showed Jack that it was Fritz.

"The Dutch boy—alive!" he cried, delightedly.

He saw that Fritz was bound so that he could not move.

Delighted at seeing his friend alive, Jack hastily drove the Typhoon over to the shore. Tim and Aljoe embarked with the carcasses of the peccaries, and he told them what he discovered.

They were as glad as he was.

Using the glass, they verified what Jack had seen.

"Arter 'em, my lad!" cried Tim, bubbling over with excitement and a desire to aid his old companion. "Don't let ther lubbers git away wi' poor ole Fritz, or they may murder him."

"That's just what I'm going to do," replied Jack.

He started his boat flying after the natives, and she began to rapidly overhaul the canoes.

"Now boys, get out your weapons," exclaimed Jack, "I'm going to run in between the shore and the canoes, to cut off their escape to the land. A concerted attack must be made upon the boat containing Fritz, if we wish to save him."

"All right," replied Aljoe, briskly.

"This makes me think o' our attack on ther rebels ther time I wuz in ther navy, aboard ther ole frigate Wabash, an'—"

"No time for yarns now, Tim!" interposed the boy.

"All O. K. my hearty. Oh—here's Aljoe wi' ther weapons."

The young man came in just then with several rifles and pistols, and while he was closing the shutters over the glass windows, Tim busied himself loading up the arms.

Having run the boat between the canoes and the shore Jack turned the lever, and sent her flying ahead at full speed.

Around flew the big wheels, the water was dashed up in showers, and the Typhoon rushed ahead.

She got between the canoes and the shore just as the natives made a desperate effort to beach their boats for she had plunged ahead so rapidly, that she was upon them ere they had taken a dozen paddle strokes.

They now regarded the boat with fear, it was very evident for they gave utterance to cries of terror when they saw her rush so swiftly toward them.

Aljoe and Tim were stationed at the loopholes in the shutters and at an order from Jack, they opened fire upon the men in the canoe that held Fritz a prisoner.

Shot after shot was fired.

Hardly one of the natives escaped an injury, and seeing that the attack was directed upon their boat, they realized at once that the assault was made to rescue the prisoner.

Fritz saw his friends battling for him, and was delighted, but he dared not open his lips to give vent to his feelings.

Most of the canoes scattered before the impetuous rush of the electric tricycle boat, and the majority of the yelling natives tried to escape by paddling across the river again.

The ones in the attacked canoe and several in the other dugouts returned our friends' fire with a volley of their own weapons, which merely broke against the metallic craft.

Jack drove the Typhoon over close to the canoe he was after, and under the terrible fire Tim and Aljoe poured out of the loopholes at its inmates, they lost courage.

Many of them were wounded, and one after another they escaped into the river and swam away, seeing that no matter how fast they paddled, the tricycle kept up to them.

Fritz was then left alone in the dugout.

Leaving the wheel in Tim's hands, Jack opened the door and ran out on deck, reached the port side, and with a knife in his hand he sprang into the canoe.

"Fritz! Thank Heaven you are alive."

"Safe me, Shack! Dose son-of-a-sea-gooks vas kill me!"

"Are you injured?" asked the boy, cutting his bonds.

"Dey only punch der doost out of me mit deir glubs."

"There—you are free! Get aboard! Get aboard!"

"Shiminey Christmas! Vot luck!" gasped Fritz, delightedly.

He was cramped from being tied and held a long time in one position, but he hastily got out of the canoe aboard of the boat.

Jack followed him.

He had scarcely reached the deck, however, when a volley of spears and arrows was fired from the escaping canoes.

Zip! came one of the barbed shafts.

It struck Jack square on the bosom and stuck there.

A cry involuntarily pealed from his lips, and he staggered back against the pilot-house, exclaiming:

"I'm shot!"

CHAPTER X.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

INTO the pilot-house Fritz dragged Jack, and the doors being fastened Tim sent the boat flying up stream, leaving the yelling natives far behind, while Aljoe hurried to ascertain the extent of the boy's injuries.

Taking off his jacket they found that the arrow had pierced a big wallet Jack carried in his breast-pocket, containing some money and papers, and going through the rest of his clothing the barb struck one of his ribs.

Slight though the wound was they had every reason to fear that the arrow might have been steeped in poison, and at once applied an antidote to prevent any serious consequences following.

When this was done the young inventor felt like himself again.

"How did you fall into the power of those natives, Fritz?" he asked.

"Ach, dey vas in der voods where I vas by der shore vashed in der flood," replied the Dutch boy, "and I near vas starfed alretty. Dey wanted to fight. Dot's all right. I didn'd away vas run, so ve vented for each odder. Dey vas

de biggest man so I got licked. Dot make me nodings ondt. I might yust so vell been eated up as to starf mineselluf. Den dey in dot canoe put me, und when dey go off dey findt dot Typhoons und hook id vonct."

"This encounter shows plainly enough that the natives in some sections of the Amazon are hostile, and that we will have to keep on our guard against them," commented Jack.

"Ay," assented Tim, taking a big chew of navy plug. "I recollect when I wuz a marine aboard o' ther ole Wabash we wuz a-sailing along ther Nile never dreamin' of danger when—wot do you think happened?"

"What?" asked Aljoe, curiously.

"A tribe o' Nubians came out o' ther undergrowth on each side o' ther river an' shot burnin' arrers at ther frigate settin' it a-fire. Ther fire brigade wuz formed, an' begun ter throw buckets of water over ther flames, an' ther gunners heaved broadside arter broadside at ther lubbers until all our ammunition wuz used up. Wot ter do then no one knew for thar wuz millions o' ther lubbers left, an' they kep' on a-firing."

"You was placed in a dangerous situation. Was the ship lost?"

"No! An' all on the accounts o' my plans," replied Tim.

"Oh, pshaw," groaned Fritz. "I vos sorry she didn't vos lost."

"Why?" demanded Tim, indignantly.

"Because if she vos lost, ve wouldn't haf to hear apoud her some more."

"Avast thar, yer lubber," growled Tim, angrily. "You ain't got ter listen ter my yarns if yer don't liken 'em—d'yer see?"

"How did you save the ship, Tim?" queried Aljoe.

"Why—yer see, sir, bein' as thar wuz no ammunition lef', an' ther natives kep' on afirin' thar burnin' arrers, I seen as somethin' had ter be did, so I hauled several bar'ls of ile over ter one o' ther gangways, an' pulled out ther bungs. Lettin' it run down inter ther water, I lit it. Ther hull river wuz lit up fer miles, an' ther flames swep' ashore, an' sot fire ter ther dried trees an' shrubs, an' ther natives wuz burnt up afore they could escape, while we sailed away an' saved ther ship."

"Is that all?"

"Ay. Ain't that enough?"

"No. You forgot something."

"Wot?"

"You failed to state why the frigate wasn't burned up as she floated in the middle of that blazing river," said Aljoe, smilingly.

Tim's jaw dropped, and a confused look crossed his face.

He was cornered, and to save his life he could not invent any explanation of the marvelous escape he seemed to have had.

"If I wuz ter stop in ther middle o' my yarn ter explain every little detail," said he, "thar wouldn't be no interest in my story."

"Do you call that a little detail, Tim?"

"Ay; it wuzn't wuth mentionin'."

"But I want an explanation."

"Well, I won't give it ter yer."

This flat refusal ended the matter, and with a grin and a wink at Jack, Aljoe and Fritz left the pilot-house to get some food.

Jack went out on deck, and Tim retained the wheel, and the natives were soon left out of sight astern.

Several days passed peacefully away, the boat making good headway to the Madeira into which she passed, and passed through the most varied and beautiful scenery.

Many cities, towns, and villages were passed, the boat was sent on to the Tuiche river, and in due course of time she reached the vicinage of Mount Sorata.

Here the real head waters of the river were reached, but an artificial tributary that trended south-westward, rushed away in a narrow, rapid stream, through a wild mountain gorge, and the boat followed it.

It was between this arm of the mountains, and the Andes range that lake Titicoca laid, and the stream they traversed ran into the lake.

The boat reached the lake late in the afternoon of a scorching hot day, and came to a pause near the shore.

"We have almost reached our destination," said Jack, as he sat down to supper with his friends. "It now remains for you, Aljoe, to guide us to the island of the Incas, and then we will begin our efforts to make away with some of the treasure."

"Our course lies to the extreme center of the lake," replied the young man, "and we can do no better than make the venture under cover of the night, to conceal our movements from the natives."

"What form of weapons are they armed with?"

"Spears, arrows, war-clubs, battle-axes and shields."

"Primitive?"

"Very."

"We will have every advantage in a struggle."

"On the water. But they number so many, that on land they could cope with us by sheer force of numbers," replied Aljoe.

"Have you attended to our weapons and armor, Fritz?"

"Yah. Eferyding vos retty."

"Tim, we will approach them under water."

"Werry good, my lad, I wuz jist about to suggest that myself."

At this juncture there came a sudden jar on the outside of the boat.

"Hello! What's that?" demanded Jack, listening.

"Sounded as if somethin' landed on ther deck," said Tim.

"No movement followed. I can't hear anything," Aljoe commented.

"Maybe dot vos some ouf der sun's vorshibers," suggested Fritz.

"I guess not," laughed Jack, arising. "It might have only been a cocoanut fallen from one of the palms. Anyway, I'll go out and see while you are finishing your suppers."

He left the room.

Going through into the pilot-house, he passed out on deck.

Nothing met his view, and he made a circuit of the deck houses with a like result, and then looked over at the shore.

The boat laid at anchor about ten feet from the embankment, and a number of trees and dense bushes were growing upon it.

Shadows of twilight had fallen, bathing the scene in a dusky color, a faint, fragrant breeze was stirring the tropical foliage, and the big lake stretched away, reflecting everything like a sheet of glass.

The voices of birds, the ugly tones of wild beasts, and the incessant rasping and scraping of insects in the grass kept up a concert that did not cease for a moment.

"Strange!" muttered Jack, with a perplexed look. "What could have made that noise? Could it have been anything in the water?"

He made a complete circuit of the boat again, peering over the side into the lake, but returned to the forward deck again without seeing anything that could have made the sound he heard.

The boy was puzzled.

He was turning the matter over in his mind, when there suddenly pealed out a most diabolical yell up over his head.

With a violent start he turned around and looked up at the top of the pilot-house, when down upon him sprang a huge jaguar.

It was this ferocious beast that made the noise that brought him out, by leaping from a tree on shore down on top of the deck house.

The terrific force with which the monster struck Jack knocked him flat on his back, and the next moment he found himself pinned down by the enormous weight of the creature.

A startled exclamation escaped the boy, and a thrill of

dismay passed over him, as he realized that he had no weapons to defend himself.

Unwilling to permit the beast to master him without a struggle, he grasped it by the throat with both hands and tried to choke it.

With gaping red mouth and fiery eyes, the jaguar was intent upon burying its formidable teeth into the boy, when he seized it, and exerted all his muscle at holding it off at arm's length.

Furious in its eagerness to get at him, it began to work its four legs, and the sharp claws striking against the boy's body and limbs, ribboned his clothing and cut him like knives.

"Help—help!" shouted Jack, at the top of his voice.

The jaguar snarled and growled at him, and ever and anon let out the blood-curdling yell it had first emitted.

Out on deck rushed Tim, Fritz and Aljoe.

Thrilled with horror over seeing Jack struggling with the wild beast, they were rooted to where they stood, unable to help him.

Fighting with fierce energy to prevent the monster tearing him to pieces, the boy was knocked about by the struggles of the jaguar.

None of the onlookers were armed.

Even if they had been, to fire a shot at the struggling beast would expose the young inventor to the chance of receiving the bullet instead of the beast.

"For pity's sake, help me!" shouted Jack.

This appeal aroused the rest, and they scattered in a effort to devise a means of assisting the boy.

The fight went on fast and furious, but with a grim determination never to relax his grasp upon the animal's throat till he was killed, Jack clung tenaciously to the beast.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ISLAND OF THE INCAS.

Fritz did not waste any time in his efforts on Jack's behalf, but seizing an ax from the rack, he fearlessly rushed up to the beast and awaiting his chance dealt it a crushing blow.

With a terrible gash in its neck, the frenzied beast tore itself away from Jack, dragging the boy halfway across the deck, and liberating itself by a tremendous exertion, it sprang for Fritz.

The Dutch boy was aiming a second blow at it just then, and as the jaguar dashed at him, it caught the keen edge of the ax across its face, and received a second ghastly wound.

An awful yell escaped it, and yet so resentful was the beast that it abandoned Jack, and kept on after Fritz.

Upon seeing it coming after him, the fat boy retreated.

Unluckily he backed up into the bow, and found escape cut off by the water when the brute crouched down to leap at him.

He had but one choice.

As soon as he saw the beast upon the point of jumping, he flung himself over the railing into the lake.

It was lucky he did so, for no sooner was he out of the bow when the flying body of the jaguar struck the spot he had evacuated.

Tim had procured a rifle from the pilot house by this time, and Jack got upon his feet in tatters, and with a score of scratches on him that were bleeding profusely.

Aljoe was inside securing a pistol.

Before the jaguar could turn, Tim fired a shot at it, and with an appalling roar, the beast wheeled around, glared at the old sailor a moment, and then sprang for him.

Nimble hopping out of its way, Tim let another shot drive, and with a great chunk of its flesh torn out, the enraged beast gave another bound, and landed with a splash in the lake.

That virtually put an end to the fight.

Fritz got up on deck again, and while the half dead beast was making a desperate effort to keep its body afloat, the

old sailor, with a well directed shot, shattered its head to fragments.

"Well done, Tim! If you have got only one eye it's a good one," cried Jack, and he went inside to dress his wounds.

The boy had been badly injured by the sharp claws of the beast, and they had to remain where they were several days longer in order to give the young inventor a chance to recuperate.

In the meantime everything was prepared for their journey across the lake to the idolators' island, and several times in the interim our friends had seen the canoes of the Incas gliding over the water in the distance, their inmates hunting and fishing for the abundant game along the shores and the finny beauties in the water.

Late in the afternoon of the fourth day Jack said to the rest:

"We may as well start. I feel a little sore yet, but my wounds are rapidly healing, and the one I got from the arrow is almost entirely well. I think I can manage all right."

"Everything is ready for ther trip, my lad," said Tim.

They then entered the pilot-house.

The lake was then about one hundred and fifty miles long, with the stream at the northern end by which they entered and another at the southern extremity, its shape being something like a pear.

From where they then were the distance to the island was about seventy-five miles, but to avoid being seen the boat was submerged.

Having closed up all the openings, Jack pulled a lever which started the pumps compressing the air in the water-chamber into the air resevoirs, and at the same time opened the valves, letting in the ballast, and the boat gradually went down.

She descended until only the top panes of glass in the pilot-house remained upon a level with the surface; then Jack pushed the lever back, the influx of the water was stopped and the boat was all concealed save the top of the turret and a small portion of the big paddle wheels.

Jack then turned a thumb screw which opened several valves to let off the carbonic acid from their breath into the water, and starting the air injectors which kept them supplied with atmosphere, he turned on a fine spray of solution by which the air was kept cooled and purified.

Having thus attended to their bodily comfort the boy then started the Typhoon's wheels, and she glided swiftly ahead.

The register marked two volts, electro-motive force for each cell of battery, which is the highest obtainable power.

"I do not understand how you can read those gauges," said Aljoe, who was intently watching Jack.

"Do you mean the power and product of amperes and volts?"

"Yes. How do you measure electricity, anyway? It is something which very few people know anything about. Can you explain it in a simple way so I can understand how to read the registers?"

"Very easily. A time may come when you may have to run the boat without my assistance, and it will be just as well for you to know how to read these gauges," replied Jack. "One volt multiplied by one ampere makes one Watt. Amperes, watts, volts and ohms are a standard of measure which you can see on those registers. Now, 746 watts equal one horse power. A horse power, as you know, is the power to lift 33,000 pounds one foot in one minute. If the electro motive force on the battery is one hundred volts it would take 746-100 amperes to produce one horse power. Let us assume that there is a constant current of ten amperes on; then it would require 74.6-10 volts to produce one horse power."

"That is plain enough for anybody to understand," said Aljoe, nodding. "I notice that everything in these measures contain the figures 746. Is it necessary to use those numbers?"

"Yes, in measuring electricity as I have explained it,"

assented Jack. "What does the log register our speed at?"

"One dial's indicating needle marks 6,085 feet per hour."

"This is one nautical mile, or 205 feet more than a statute mile of 5,280 feet, gained every hour. Going twenty nautical miles an hour, in just three and three-quarter hours we will reach the island. If we were going at the rate of statute miles, in three hours and three-quarters we would be 665 1-4 feet from the island."

"You calculate everything pretty close, don't you?"

"It is necessary to do so to be perfectly correct."

"Lord, what a lie!"

A look of surprise crossed Jack's face.

"Ain't you speaking rather rudely, Aljoe?" he asked.

"Why no—I——"

"Shut up, you son-of-a-gun! Ho, ho, ho! Crack, crack, crack-er!"

Jack and Aljoe started, turned around, and burst out laughing, for the rude speaker was Bismark, the parrot, hanging in a cage overhead.

"Excuse me, I thought you called me a liar," laughed Jack.

"Fritz, your bird is more accomplished than polite," said Aljoe, laughing.

"Ach, dot vosn'd nodings," smiled the fat boy. "Yer oughter hear him when he vas tellin' der truth."

"The truth?"

"Yah. He told Dim dot he vas a gimblet-eyed oldt rooster the udder day."

"Holy smoke?" roared the ancient mariner, getting red in the face, "d'yer mean ter insult me, yer bandy-legged swab?"

"Shimney Christmas, no; I wanted to pay you a compliments," the fat boy chuckled, "because Bismark didn't said nodings worsen enough about you alretty."

Tim's dignity was completely upset.

He uttered a suppressed roar, and grabbed Fritz by the ear.

"When I wuz in the navy," he bellowed, "a blubber said lesser than that ter me, an' I poured a kag o' gunpowder up his nose, stuck in a slow match, lit it, an' heaved him aboard o' one o' ther enemy's ships. When he busted, ther enemy's ship wnz floatin' on a cloud. Now you git out o' here, or I'll do ther same ter you."

"Vot vos der size ouf his nose?" demanded Fritz, as he broke loose and darted into the cabin. "I vish dot I haf a nose so bick dot it could a kag ouf powder hold, when I vos shmellin' cologne. Yust think how much a feller could inchoy dot, und——"

But ere he could say another word, Tim made a dash for him, and they disappeared in the next room, where a furious struggle took place that lasted half an hour.

Jack and Aljoe kept a watch ahead out the window.

The twilight deepened into night, and the bright silvery moon arose in the starry sky, lighting up the scene as if by day.

Making rapid progress, the boat presently arrived near enough to their destination for them to make out the Inca's Island.

It was an almost circular mass of rocks, two miles in diameter, rising a hundred feet above the water, crested on top with dense tropical foliage, amid which there arose from the center a large pyramid fifty feet high.

Here and there among the trees and bushes they could see the white gleaming outlines of peculiar-looking oblong buildings, while down upon the water there passed a canoe at intervals of every five minutes, showing plainly that a large number of these dug-outs were circling around and around the island.

"They are the night watch," explained Aljoe. "There must be fifty of those canoes, each one containing a single man. They are started every night to paddle around and around the sacred island on guard. You can, therefore, see how well and jealously they protect the place from invasion."

"It is almost impossible for any one to pass them un-

seen," commented Jack. "How long has this been going on?"

"Ever since they first took possession of the island."

"No wonder they caught you when you ventured to this land."

"On that Isle of Coricancha stands the city of oblong buildings, built of granite and porphyry," said Aljoe. "As I remember it, they were, as the parchment said, thickly studded with plates and bosses of massive gold and silver. The Temple of the Sun stands near the base of the pyramid. It contains a large human face of gold. This disc is three feet in diameter and two feet thick, polished with greater care and skill than a modern jeweler can do his work, and is thickly incrustated with precious stones. They call it Pachacamac, after the sun, which they worship devoutly."

"We must devise a means of getting possession of it," said Jack. "I intend to penetrate that city at any cost," and——

"Look out!" interposed Aljoe just then.

The boat had come to a pause, but it had drifted almost in the way of the canoes that kept encircling the island.

One of them was then rapidly nearing her, and threatened every moment to run her down.

Jack rapidly turned on the current, and she shot ahead.

The natives in the canoe heard the top of the paddle-wheels that projected beating the water, and came to a pause.

He peered ahead and saw the wheel beat the water to foam, and with a startled cry he paddled away.

"He has seen the boat!" said Jack, in disgust. "He don't know what it is, but he is summoning his friends in the other canoes, and there are three coming this way now to investigate."

"You'd better sink her out of sight then," suggested Aljoe.

"Look ahead! Ain't that a water cave in the rocks?"

"That dark opening? Yes—at least, it looks like one."

"I'm going for it under water."

Jack sunk the boat a few feet below the surface.

Here nothing of her movements could be seen, and he steered her straight toward the opening he had seen in the rocks.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SUBTERRANEAN CRYSTAL CAVERN.

THE moment the boat was submerged Jack pulled two levers, one of them starting the incandescent lamps aglow all through the Typhoon, and the other causing the search-light to flare out.

It was a powerful light, with a strong reflector, and cut through the water a great distance ahead.

The mellow glow of the lights attracted all the fishes that were anywhere near up to the boat, and they swam around it with evident wonder and curiosity.

In the rays of the light Jack and his companions saw the huge opening in the face of the rocky cliff, and observing that it was amply large to admit the passage of the boat, they watched until the tricycle had passed through.

She entered an immense tunnel.

The bottom was only a dozen feet below the boat, which necessitated raising the center-board, and the sides were jagged.

Along this waterway they glided, without seeing the other end of it, and with a look of surprise, Jack remarked:

"Why, this is more than a cavern—it's a tunnel."

"Are you going to stop here?" queried Tim.

"The natives don't know what has become of us, I guess."

"I doubt if they knew this was a boat!" said Aljoe.

"Vot's der matter mit seem' vot kind onf a place vo vos in?" suggested Fritz. "Dere don't vos some good an shtayin' here vonct."

"I'd just as lief explore the place," replied Jack. "It runs inland a good ways apparently, and who knows but that it may lead us to some outlet near the village we wish to penetrate. What say you—shall we do it?"

"Ay, ay!" answered Tim.

"Go ahead!" added Aljoe.

Jack had not stopped the boat, but she was going at the comparatively slow time of four miles an hour, and he let her go on at that rate.

The rest stationed themselves at the windows, peered out, and by their remarks, kept Jack posted about the sort of a place they were penetrating.

For some distance the under-water passage continued much the same as when they had first entered it, then it gradually broadened out, and finally the sides and roof vanished.

Calculating between the log and chronometer, Jack found that the boat had thus far traversed nearly a quarter of a mile, and the compass showed him that they went in almost a straight line.

"I am going to the surface, boys," he remarked.

He then set the pumps going, and emptying out the ballast, he allowed the air to expand in the water chamber again, and the Typhoon ascended to the surface.

The moment she reached the top a cry of surprise escaped Jack.

"Why, we are in a huge cavern!" he exclaimed.

It was a fact.

The roof the cavern was fully forty feet above the boat, and, in the glare of the electric lights, presented a superb appearance.

It was made of the purest white crystals of stalactite formation, and flashed with the blinding scintillations of thousands of diamonds.

Great sparkling columns arose from the water to support the roof, joined at the tops by massive arches; wonderful galleries ran around the sides, and dozens of strange formations were to be seen on all sides, worked out by the mysterious hand of nature.

A deathly silence prevailed, which was only broken by the tinkling murmur of dripping water that fell into the lake from the icicle-like pendants hanging down from the roof.

The subterranean lake wound in and out among these pillars and arches like a pool of ink in that dense gloom.

Even the fishes infesting this strange lake had no eyes, and a species of bats flew through the air, while here and there great spiders wove their webs among the beautiful stalactites.

"What is this—fairylane?" breathlessly asked Aljoe, as he stared around, enraptured by the singular scene.

"I reckon as we're under ther island," said Tim, soberly.

"No doubt of it," replied Jack. "I'm sorry I didn't buoy the spot where we came up, for when we try to get out of here again we may have trouble to find the exit, I fear."

"Vny don't yer go aheth?" queried Fritz, curiously. "Ve might as well haf a look at dot cafes alretty as to shtay here."

It was evident that the cavern was very large.

Indeed, they soon found that it ramified under the greater part of the island, and the Typhoon was driven about from place to place, everywhere newer and stranger beauties meeting their eyes.

An hour was spent in this manner, and Jack was just about to send the tricycle boat down a side passage, when Tim suddenly touched his arm and exclaimed:

"Avast thar, my lad! wot's that?"

"What do you mean, Tim?" asked the boy.

"See that staircase?"

"Whereabouts?"

Tim pointed at a huge column.

It was in the middle of the cavern.

Rising up from the water it joined the roof.

A flight of rude stairs had been carved around this great column, extending from the roof to the water.

It was evident that these stairs were made by the hand

of man, for they were guarded by a rude hand rail, made of saplings, which in places had fallen to decay.

"There's a means of getting out of the cavern, I am confident," said Jack, closely scrutinizing the stairs.

He steered the boat over to the column, and saw that there was a sort of platform at the base of it on a level with the water, upon which the staircase terminated.

Bringing the Typhoon to a pause at this platform, the boy directed the movable search-light up at the stairs, and then said:

"I have a great mind to climb up those stairs and see what lies beyond."

"*Donner vetter!* Dot vos good! I go mit yer!" said Fritz. "Coom on."

Jack put the wheel in Tim's hands.

"Guard the boat and stay here until we return," said he.

"Ay, lad, but be sure an' arm yerself."

"Aljoe, you remain on lookout constantly."

"Trust me," replied the young man, nodding.

"Now, Fritz, before we go, it would be just as well to take every precaution. Get on your suit of armor, my boy."

In the store-room there were a number of metallic suits, not unlike the mail worn by ancient knights, and they each put one on and armed themselves with a brace of revolvers apiece.

Debarking upon the crystal platform, they waved their hands to Tim and Aljoe, and began to mount the stairs winding around the pillar.

"No noise when we reach the top, Fritz," cautioned the young inventor, when they were launched on their journey. "We may find ourselves in the midst of our enemies when we get out of this cavern."

"All I vant vos a fight," replied the fat boy.

"This hand rail must be very old. See how it crumbles to pieces when I touch it. The stairs must have been made centuries ago by the first of the sun worshippers who came to this island to dwell."

"Vot vos it made for?"

"That's a mystery I cannot fathom yet."

"Vell, dere's der dop ouf der shtairs, Shack."

They came to a pause on a sort of a platform.

It was very dark here, but they were provided with lights.

On their backs they each carried a double cylinder of aluminum, one of which contained compressed air, and the other an electric battery, the wires from which ran up to the tops of their helmets, on which were fastened small but powerful lamps.

By turning thumb screws in their breastplates they started the lights, and a powerful gleam shot from each of the lamps and enveloped everything in their way in an effulgence of light.

These illuminations showed them a door set in the column and upon trying to push it open Jack saw it crumble to dust.

Its disappearance revealed an aperture inside of the column, and entering this place, which was a shaft about four feet in diameter, they found a second flight of stairs winding up on the inside.

Jack mounted a dozen steps, followed by Fritz.

Then he was forced to a pause by his head coming in contact with a metallic roof over the shaft.

He examined it and saw that it was two plates of silver.

Listening intently and hearing no sound, he gave it a push with his shoulder, when, as he expected, he saw that it was a hinged trap-door, which gave way before the pressure.

It was about one inch thick.

Divided in two, each of the doors rested on a metallic cross beam.

Each door was two feet wide and four feet long.

The half Jack pushed up was very heavy and opened hard as it had evidently been in disuse for a long time, and a shower of dust and dirt came down upon him.

Again the boy cautiously listened.

A deep and impressive silence reigned.

Re-assured, he now ventured to push the trap up all the way and the next moment his head went up through the opening and he cast a rapid glance around.

The trap-door had opened into a room in a building.

It was wrapped in the most intense gloom and the boy only ascertained his position and then turned out his light.

"Fritz!" he softly whispered.

"Yah," came the reply.

"We are in a room."

"Where apouds?"

"I can't see."

"Any vun aroundt?"

"Not a soul."

"You go oop?"

"May as well."

"Keep your bistol retty."

"All right. Make no noise."

"Go ahet, and I follow you."

The boy stepped out into the room, and Fritz joined him.

They were within an immense chamber containing several windows, which seemed to be covered with matting, and the boy glided over to one on the south side and drew it aside.

A brilliant flood of moonlight flooded the casement, and gushing in, exposed their situation quite plainly.

The room was of immense size, the roof was supported by great pillars and embellished with sculptured cornices, and everything flashed and gleamed with the luster of precious stones.

The tiled floor was bare.

But in the middle of the room was a magnificent altar, upon which stood an enormous golden image of the sun.

It was wrought in the form of an ugly human face.

The altar was made of magnificently carved gold, studded with diamonds, rubies and sapphires, its delicate tracing, fine scrolls, exquisitely carved filigrees and beautiful moldings, displaying a perfection of art that was wonderful.

The young inventor grasped his friend's arm.

"Fritz! We are in the room of the sun god!" he whispered.

"Holy Moses, vot a roast!" muttered the Dutch boy.

But hardly had these words escaped him, when a door at the end of the room opened, and a score of men carrying flaming torches suddenly came swarming in.

CHAPTER XIII.

BOY AGAINST BEASTS.

CROUCHING before the altar of the sun-god of the Incas, the young inventor and his friend glanced over at the opened doorway in startled surprise at a score of men bearing flaming torches in their hands, who had suddenly entered.

In the glaring light of the torches, these individuals were quite plain to be seen, and the boys observed that they were all robed in the flowing garments and feathered skull caps of the priests of the temple, while their looks were strictly those of pure Peruvians.

These Incas were the temporal sovereigns and high pontiffs of the people, as they were regarded as descendants of the sun and were held sacred, their orders being blindly obeyed and adored by nobles as well as common people.

They were Quichuas of a copper color, with small foreheads, the hair growing on each side from the extremities of the eyebrows; they had small black eyes, small noses, moderate sized mouths with beautiful teeth, round faces, and generally were beardless, except when very old.

Their hair was coarse, black and sleek, their bodies well proportioned, the feet small, and stature rather diminutive.

The blaze of their torches lit up the temple brilliantly, and the foremost of the Incas suddenly observed that the covering over the window which Jack had removed was disturbed.

He uttered a shout and pointed at it.

Then the rest saw Jack and Fritz.

A chorus of harmonious words arose from the crowd.

"Discovered!" exclaimed Jack in deep chagrin.

"Dot saddles id," growled Fritz. "Shall I shoood 'em?"

"It won't do any good."

"Vot's to be done den?"

"Escape to the boat."

"Vot! Run away from dem?"

"Yes. We can return for the gold."

Fritz gave a grunt of disappointment, for his combative nature craved a fight, but he made a rush for the trap-door.

It opened in the floor midway between the Incas and the altar.

Jack ran after him, but, stumbling, he fell to the floor, and his head coming in contact with the stones, slightly stunned him.

Unaware of Jack's misfortune, Fritz reached the open trap and dodged down, but before the young inventor recovered and fairly got upon his feet, the Incas reached the trap, slammed it shut, and while some guarded it, the rest made a rush for Jack, uttering the wildest cries of anger.

The boy saw his danger.

He drew his revolver.

Before he could draw a bead on the Incas, they reached him, and falling upon him in a body, they knocked the weapon from his hand and felled him to the floor.

"Shack! Shack!" yelled the smothered voice of Fritz.

"Run! I'm caught!" shouted Jack, hopelessly.

"Caughted?"

"Yes."

"Ach Gott!"

Before Jack could say another word the howling priests drew the obsidian knives carried in their girdles, and a dozen of the long blades were aimed at him on all sides.

Down they came at his body.

Crash! Crash! Crash!

Every blade that struck his metallic suit was shattered, and the Incas gazed at the boy, fairly dumfounded.

They could not understand how it was that his suit of mail resisted their weapons, and before they could get over their astonishment, Jack was upon his feet.

The boy fought them like a demon.

He doubled up his fists and struck out right and left, knocking over every one of the men who opposed him.

For a few moments it looked as if the plucky young inventor would escape from his foes.

But the noise of the row brought a score more of the Incas rushing in pell mell, and going to the aid of the others they attacked Jack with renewed fury again.

Overwhelmed by sheer force of numbers the gallant boy was knocked down, and bonds were soon forthcoming, when they tied him hand and foot despite his efforts to resist them.

Panting and perspiring, Jack lay upon the floor and watched the excited hordes as they jabbered, gesticulated, and raved.

One of them opened the trap-door as if to go down after Fritz, but he had hardly placed his foot on the topmost step of the staircase when there sounded a smothered report.

Fritz had fired at him.

The bullet struck the man in the leg.

He uttered a yell of pain and fright, jumped up into the room, rolled over and over upon the floor, and several of his friends hastily slammed down the trap again.

Another excited talk followed.

They examined their wounded companion.

Some of them lifted him up and carried him away.

In a few minutes they came to a conclusion about the young inventor, and he was carried from the room by two of the men.

They brought him through a tiled court-yard and into a spacious room that resembled the amphitheater of a circus.

It was lit up by smoking torches, and was filled with people, while upon a raised dais at one side sat the ruler of the tribe with a negro on each side of him waving long-handled

fans of peacock feathers over him, and a number of musicians played on their instruments close by.

Flung upon the ground in front of the chief Inca who occupied the throne, Jack took in his surroundings at a glance.

The amphitheater had no roof, save the dark dome of heaven, which was dotted with stars, among the bright constellations of which the silvery moon shone down like an electric light.

Hundreds of the Quichuas filled the seats with a sea of faces that took on a strange aspect in the lights of the flaming and smoking torches.

Below them, in the arena, there were two wild beasts.

One of them uttered a terrific roar, attracting Jack's attention.

They were enormous panthers, and had been captured, starved and put into the arena to fight a duel of death for the amusement of the sun worshippers when Jack was brought in.

A few words from the boy's captors explained what they knew of him, and when the assembled multitude heard what was said a loud murmur of indignation arose upon all sides.

By penetrating the sanctuary of the Incas, the young inventor had committed a grave sacrilege against their holy laws.

He could not have offended them worse.

The clamoring voices grew louder, until they swelled into a roar, the people moved uneasily in their seats and soon began to rise and shout threats in their own language.

Jack apprehended his danger, but of course did not understand what they said, although their actions plainly indicated their resentment of his intrusion and showed their bitter hatred of his race.

In the midst of the furious uproar, the chief Inca arose and held up his hand, enjoining silence, when like magic the voices ceased.

A deathly hush fell over the assemblage.

Satisfied, the Inca addressed a few syllables to the people.

He then re-seated himself and a shout of acclamation arose.

Jack was not kept long in ignorance of what was said, for two of the priests seized him and carried him over to the arena.

Here they severed his bonds and flung him down to the wild beasts.

The savages had evidently designed to make him fight the two panthers for their amusement, without giving him a weapon to defend himself, in order to put him out of the way.

Such barbarous cruelty alone could satisfy them, but the boy yet had his other pistol in the belt of his suit.

He landed on the floor of the arena upon his hands and knees, fell over, and tingling in every nerve from the shock, he heard the panthers roar at him, and saw them rush away in alarm.

The audience was fearfully excited now.

This savage sport of pitting an unarmed (as they thought) man against two ravenous wild beasts, was a grand sight, and they eagerly watched the boy and the beasts, and kept up a continued buzz of conversation commenting on the scene.

Jack arose from his feet.

The boy's face was as pale as death.

Yet his courage did not forsake him for a moment.

He saw how matters stood, and muttered:

"If the panthers don't kill me, I will kill them. Yet that won't purchase my liberty. If I do it they will murder me anyhow."

It was a cheerless outlook, yet he had divined the truth.

While there was life there was hope, and he resolved to fight desperately for his life and prolong his existence to give his friends an opportunity to do something for him.

By the crimson light of the torches he sized up his foes.

They were enormous beasts, graceful, slender and flexible, with very long tails, spotted fur, the spots being arranged in

numerous rows along the sides, and each spot being composed of five or six smaller spots arranged in circles.

Of a deep yellow color, the lower parts lighter, and the spots darker than the general color of the fur, they had glaring eyes and ugly mouths armed with formidable rows of teeth.

They slunk along the masonry walling in the arena, ever and anon giving utterance to low, whining cries.

When they met they paused to snarl at each other, lashing their flanks with their tails, and one went in one direction and the other went the opposite way.

In this manner Jack was approached on either side.

The boy drew his pistol, aimed at one and fired.

It gave a yell, bounded in the air, and fell dead at his feet, while there arose a wild roar from the audience.

No report had followed the discharge, but the ball burst in the beast's body, destroying its life instantly.

The other panther rushed across the arena, crouched down to the ground, and fastened a savage glance upon Jack.

Cool and collected the boy stood toying with his pistol a moment, glancing from the dead beast to the live one.

Then to everybody's amazement he suddenly approached the panther.

Deliberately walking over to it he came to a pause within ten feet of the snarling beast, and without lifting his weapon to aim he pulled the trigger again.

A smothered explosion followed.

There came a convulsive movement of the panther's body, it fell over on its side and then became rigid.

It was dead.

For several moments no one realized it.

When they did a cry arose to the skies that made the walls of the big arena tremble, and their fury knew no bounds.

Instead of the boy falling a victim of the wild beasts, he had quietly dispatched them without receiving a scratch!

It was most unexpected.

The evil passions of the spectators were aroused.

They hurled a volley of stone hatchets, golden shields, swords and javelins at the brave lad from all sides, and struck by many of the missiles Jack fell to the ground.

CHAPTER XIV.

WRECKED UNDER WATER.

In the meantime, Fritz having found that Jack had fallen into the power of the sun worshippers, had gone down the shaft.

Here he remained until he shot one of the Incas, and saw the trap-door slammed down, and then he had gone down the stairs into the great stalactite cavern, to join his friends on board of the boat, and apprise them of what had happened.

Their alarm was intense when they heard what had befallen Jack, and a consultation was held at once, to determine what they could do to assist the boy to escape from his enemies.

"You can depend upon one thing," said Aljoe, "and that is that they will show him no mercy for penetrating the holy precincts of the Temple of the Sun."

"Ain't thar no way ter git out o' here, besides that 'ere trap-door?" demanded Tim. "It ain't werry likely as we kin git through thar now, 'cause them lubbers'll be sure to guard it."

"Yust before ve shtop here," said Fritz, "ve vos going troo dot passage ower dere, to see vot dot star meant."

"What star?" quickly asked Aljoe.

"Ach, didn'd yer seen id alretty?"

"No, I didn't know you had observed one."

"Den looker down dere," said Fritz, pointing out a window.

Between a row of the great columns, there was a long black passage, which had not yet been explored, and at the end of it Tim and Aljoe now saw a small reddish-blue light,

not much bigger than a pin's head, shining in the gloom.

It looked like a star.

"Dash my toplights if there ain't a openin' ahead!" cried Tim.

"Let us go and see," suggested Aljoe. "We can't do anything for Wright by remaining here, my friends. Our only hope is to get upon the island some other way. If we don't reach him before daylight, you can depend that his life will be sacrificed."

Eagerly anxious to do anything for Jack, the others assented to this plan, and they entered the pilot-house.

Here Tim started the boat faster than was compatible with safety, and the Typhoon's big wheels churned the water and she dashed ahead toward the twinkling light.

Fritz and Aljoe kept up a keen lookout by the glow of the search-light which streamed far ahead of the boat.

The water was as clear as a dark crystal on the surface, and as they drew nearer to the light it became more distinct.

"It isn't a star, after all," remarked Aljoe, presently.

"Not a star? Then wot in thunder is it?" queried Tim, uneasily.

"A fire of some kind reduced in size by the distance."

"Den id' must be a puddle leedle vun," commented Fritz.

"It is small. Have you a night glass?"

"Here she vos," assented the fat boy, handing one over.

Aljoe studied the light with it very carefully.

Then he laid the glass down.

"I see what it is," he remarked. "It's a fire on a sort of altar."

"Then thar ain't no openin' ahead?" queried Tim.

"Oh, yes, there is. I saw a very large opening in the form of an arch. To get this boat through we will have to submerge her. Beyond the arch is a small inland pond or lake, near which the altar stands. We have access to the interior in our grasp."

"Shiminetty, dot vos goot!" ejaculated Fritz. "Now ve can helb dot Shack. Lower der poat, Dim. I vos itchin' to got in a fight mit dem fellers vot prays to der sun."

The old sailor started the pumps.

He gradually sunk the boat, while Fritz went around to see that all the doors and windows were closed, and she descended until the roof of her deck-house was flush with the top of the water.

Then Tim stopped her descent.

She kept forging ahead rapidly.

Suddenly there sounded a grinding crash beneath the boat.

The shock almost knocked her inmates down, and the Typhoon suddenly came to a pause, whirled around, and there came a roaring and gurgling sound down below.

"An accident!" shouted Aljoe, in startled tones.

"Shtop der poat!" roared Fritz.

"Escape fer yer lives!" yelled Tim, reversing the lever.

But escape was then impossible, for they were cooped up below the surface, and they found the Typhoon rapidly sinking.

As she went down they glanced out and saw a huge, jagged stalagmite of glittering rock crystal rising up from the bottom nearby, upon which the boat had run.

Lying unseen close to the keel the stalagmite had been struck by the garboard on the port side, a hole was stove in the hull of the Typhoon, and she was filling with water.

They all realized this at a glance, and their hearts sank like lead, for the accident could scarcely have happened at a worse time.

In a moment they were all upon the alert to find out whether they would have to leave the boat and ascend to the surface to save their lives if the water came in.

"Fritz!" shouted Tim.

"Yah!" came the nervous reply.

"Git out our divin' suits."

"All right," said Fritz, and away he ran.

"Aljoe, kin ye locate that gurglin' sound?"

"It seems to be down in the hold."

"Open the trap, an' see if ther engine room is fillin'."

Aljoe did so, and the electric lights flooded the compartment below.

Once glance was enough for him.

"Dry as a bone," was his verdict.

"Thank ther Lord fer that!" fervently cried Tim.

"Where is the leak do you suppose?"

"Wery likely in ther water-room or air reservoirs."

"Here comes Fritz with our suits. He has his on, you know."

The Dutch boy brought in two suits similar to the ones he and Jack had worn, and Tim and Aljoe put them on.

"I reckon we won't need 'em right away," commented the old sailor. "But it's jest as well ter be prepared."

"Dit yer vos foundt where dot droubles vos?" queried Fritz.

"No," replied Tim. "Ah! we've reached ther bottom now."

The Typhoon had come to a pause.

By looking out the window they saw that they were on the bottom of the subterranean lake, and Fritz glanced at the depth gauge.

"Sunken in dwenty feets of vater," he remarked.

"That ain't much," said Tim. "It might a-been wuss."

"And no water is entering the engine-room yet."

"We mustn't lose no time a-findin' out whar ther trouble lies, an' rectify it," said Tim. "An' ther only way ter do it is ter go out an' have a look at ther bottom. Cuss that rock! Why in blazes didn't it keep out o' our course until we saved Jack?"

"Raving ain't going to mend matters," said Aljoe. "How do you operate these suits to leave the boat under water, any way?"

"Close yer visor, an' turn ther thumb screws ter fasten ther bezzles in thar places," said Tim. "Then yer twists ther screw on ther right-hand side o' yer breastplate, an' that starts yer valve in ther air reservoir open, an' yer gits yer artificial lung a-workin'. Arter that turn ther screw on ther lef'-han' side, an' yer electric lamp gives light. Jist watch how I works it, an' yer kin do ther same."

Tim exemplified his instructions.

When they were both ready the air from the cylinders on their backs was fed to them by an automatic machine, and their helmet lamps emitted a bright glow.

Fritz was to remain in the boat on guard.

Then Tim led his companion to the rear compartment.

Closing the water tight doors, they shut themselves in the small metal-lined closet, and Tim turned a screw on the wall.

Water poured steadily into the closet through several pipes until the room was filled, and then the old sailor opened the sternmost door and stepped out on deck.

It was a peculiar sensation to Aljoe to find himself walking under the water with as much ease as he could on dry land, but to Tim it was no novelty, as the old sailor on other occasions had been hundreds of feet under the ocean in these suits of Jack's invention.

Tim took a survey of the situation.

The Typhoon lay keeled over on her side upon a hard, rocky bottom of rock crystal, covered with slime and mud.

This deposit was not very deep, fortunately, and when the old sailor had gauged it, he went over the side, followed by Aljoe, and landed knee deep in the sediment.

It was hard to walk through it, but they made their way around the boat with some exertion, and reaching the upheaved side, closely examined it by the rays of their electric lights.

They could not see anything of a break in the hull.

It therefore became manifest to Tim that the side where the boat struck was that upon which she lay keeled over.

It was impossible to get at it in the position in which the Typhoon then lay, nor was their strength equal to the task of shifting the boat over.

Tim pondered.

A plan suggested itself.

He left Aljoe, and went off on a tour of inspection.

When he returned, he motioned to Aljoe to remain where he was, and climbing upon the deck, he entered the water chamber, closed the door and pulled a lever setting the pumps in motion.

They emptied the closet of the water that filled it, and Tim then opened the other door and passed within the boat.

He returned accompanied by Fritz, and between them they carried a long coil of rope and two strong blocks.

One of these blocks was fastened to a ring bolt in the deck on the side that was lowest, and the rope was run through it, after which the other block and both ends of the rope were carried to a thick stalagmite on the side of the boat that was highest.

Here the block was fastened, one end of the rope secured to it, and the other end rove through it, when the three began to haul.

A good purchase was gained, and by their united exertions they finally tilted the Typhoon over the other way.

An examination was then made, and they saw that a gaping hole a foot in diameter had been stove through the port garboard into which the water rushed, filling the ballast reservoir.

It was impossible to manage the boat until the damage was repaired, and having seen that they could put in a patch, they set to work upon it without delay.

Holes were bored through the plate they took from the store-room, and bolts were shoved through from the outside by Tim, while Fritz went in and started the pump.

Tim held the patch over the aperture so that but little water leaked in, and when Fritz emptied some of the water from the ballast chamber, he opened a trap and went into it with a wrench.

It was so small in diameter he had to creep along, but he finally reached the bolts, screwed the nuts on, and tightened them up.

By this means a perfectly water-tight patch was put on.

They were nearly all night doing the work, but when it was finished, they found the boat to be in nearly as good condition as she ever was.

Returning to the pilot-house, and taking off their suits, they tried the boat and found that she arose easily.

When she got her pilot-house roof out of the water, Tim stopped her ascent, and drove her ahead toward the arched opening, through which the light of day was just breaking.

CHAPTER XV.

A HUMAN SACRIFICE TO THE SUN.

JACK was almost overwhelmed by the furious onslaught of missiles flung at him by the enraged savages surrounding the arena.

As he fell to the floor buried in a heap of the missiles from being hurt by which his metallic suit saved him, the chief Inca arose to his feet and held up his hand.

Instantly the excitement subsided and no more missiles were flung.

The head priest then addressed some remarks to the people, and a door in the arena walls was flung open and several attendants ran in, fell upon Jack and bound him again.

The metallic suit was broken from his body.

He had on his nautical costume underneath, and they carried him through a passageway to a small room of stone with a rude door made of heavy timbers.

They left him there, closed and bolted the door and retired.

He was left alone the rest of the night.

Jack had not been hurt any save when they were depriving him of his armor, and then he only received several knocks and bruises, over the pain of which he soon recovered.

He turned the situation over in his mind, and then he banished all apprehension from his mind with stoic pluck, and coolly regardless of his danger he went asleep.

Peacefully reposing until half an hour before daylight, the young inventor was suddenly awakened by hearing a strange, monotonous, droning sound.

It came from outside somewhere.

He soon realized his position, and sitting up he glanced around, and then listened intently to the queer noise.

It was a wild, barbaric chant.

There were several voices engaged in it, and the words were in the harmonious tongue of the Quichuas.

"Some devilish incantation in their religion no doubt," the boy muttered. "Those Incas are fiends. Ha! What's that?"

The dull clanging of a sort of gong rang through the building he was in, and the song rose louder and louder.

Presently the boy heard the murmur of many voices, the tramping of footsteps, and then the door of his cell was opened and several of the Incas came in muttering their prayers.

The corridor outside was flooded with the dim gray light of the early dawn, and the clanging of the gong kept receding.

Grouping themselves around the prostrate boy, the Incas kept on praying until at last there sounded the voice of a man shouting out something at intervals of every few moments.

He seemed to be repeating the same thing over and over again, and the priests around the boy stopped praying, cut his ankle bonds, and assisting him to his feet, they led him out of the cell.

"What the deuce are you going to do with me now?" Jack demanded, but he knew that they couldn't understand him.

A scowling glance and an unintelligible syllable from one of the Incas was all the reply he received.

They led him through an arched doorway into an oblong court-yard, from the middle of which arose the great pyramid which Aljoe had mentioned to him.

It was fully fifty feet high, and was made of granite blocks, its form being series of steps, and all four sides running up to the top, which converged from a diameter of fifty feet at the base, to a platform at the apex of no more than ten feet across.

On top was an altar with a fire burning on it, and several Incas kneeling around it, singing their dreary ode.

The court-yard was filled with Incas in peculiar attire.

The chief wore a head-dress of which the tasseled fringe, with two feathers placed upright in it, were his insignia of royalty.

There were many noblemen in the court-yard, yet none of them dared to enter the presence of the Inca without bared feet and bearing a burden on their shoulders in token of homage and allegiance.

The moment Jack's glance fell upon the altar, he shuddered.

"They are going to offer me as a burnt sacrifice to the sun!" he muttered, as the appalling truth flashed across his mind.

A number of the Incas and nobles in the yard grouped around him, a procession was formed, and led by a captor upon each side, the boy was forced to mount the steps of the pyramid.

He reached the top, and found the priests kneeling there, with their heads bowed to the east, and their foreheads touching the ground.

From his lofty elevation Jack gained a view of his surroundings, and took in the scene with a lively interest.

The sacrificial pyramid stood in the midst of a city of ancient buildings, half buried in creeping vines, in the center of the island.

Beyond the court-yard walls all the inhabitants were gathered in scanty attire, with their faces turned to the east, to watch for the rising of the sun.

Further away the rock-girt isle was covered with tropical vegetation, over which hovered eagles and condors.

The rocky heights were riven by chasms and deeply-cut

precipices, and the table-lands were crowned by waving crops of wheat and maize.

Where the hill slopes were too steep to admit of cultivation, terraces were cut, soil accumulated on them, and the level surfaces were converted into a species of beautiful hanging gardens.

Large flocks of llamas were grazed on the plateaux, while the more hardy vicunas and alpacas roamed at freedom, to be driven together at stated periods, however, to be shorn and killed.

On all sides of the island sparkled the lively waters of the Titicaca, and in the center of the village there nestled a beautiful round little lake, upon which floated the gaudy canoes of the natives.

While Jack was taking in this scene, the priests were going on with their barbaric ceremonials, one of them feeding the ruddy blaze of the fire on the altar, and the rest chanting.

They were all waiting for the appearance of the orb of day.

It was to be the signal of Jack Wright's doom.

How these people could cling to such an idolatrous religion as to sacrifice human life to the sun was a mystery to Jack, for when he had come to this lake he had witnessed the work of the tribe on the main done in years gone by which was the most stupendous the world ever saw.

Water was collected in lakes among the mountains, led down the slopes by canals and subterranean passages constructed on a vast scale, covering sometimes 500 miles in length, for irrigation.

He was speculating over this, and waiting patiently for further developments, when a cry arose from every one.

With a start the boy looked up.

Along the eastern horizon the first golden shafts of the rising sun were streaking upwards into the gray sky.

One of the Incas now seized the boy and flung him on the altar.

It was useless to resist—he could do nothing.

The venerable wretch, with a horrible look of diabolical exultation upon his copper-colored face, tore open the covering of Jack's bosom and laid bare his breast.

Upon the altar there lay a long, sharp obsidian knife, and he picked it up and carefully felt of its keen point and sharp edge.

"Can my friends do nothing for me?" muttered Jack, desperately.

It seemed as if he was doomed.

To get as near as this to the portal of death and escape, seemed to be so absurd a hope that the boy would not entertain it.

"I'm bound to perish!" he thought.

With so many people surrounding the court-yard—with such a multitude upon the pyramid and at its base—how could three men do anything to help him?

"Madness! Rank madness to hope for it!" he muttered.

Jack reluctantly resigned himself to his fate with a calmness that was simply wonderful.

The heat from the fire which was blazing within a yard of where he lay grew terribly uncomfortable, and as the boy looked up and saw the dagger in the priest's hand a sigh of the most intense satisfaction escaped him.

"He will probably kill me with the knife ere consigning my body to the funeral pyre," he thought, gratefully, "It will be far preferable to die that way than by the flames."

Now the blood red disc of the sun appeared.

"Pachacamac! Pachacamac!" (Creator of the World) yelled every one.

The discordant clang of the dismal gong rang out above the din of their voices, the fire on the altar flared up brighter, and the priest with the knife shaded his eyes with his hand and watched the rising of the sun.

When the fiery disc was clear of the horizon Jack was doomed.

Up—up, up it went, sending forth a bright radiation of shafts in all directions, and the Inca raised his knife.

The keen blade was held suspended straight over Jack's heart so that one downward plunge would bury it deep in the quivering flesh.

Up—up rose the sun higher each moment, and presently the nearer lower edge of its brilliant disc was hidden.

The moment had arrived

A frenzied shout escaped the Inca's lips.

Every one expected to see him stab the boy, for they turned their faces from the east and looked up at him.

He reeled back, dropped the knife, clapped his hand to his forehead, and uttering a groan of anguish he fell dead.

Not to be baffled in their religious design a second Inca grasped the fallen knife, with a cry of savage fury he sprang at the boy, and in another moment he would have killed Jack had he not undergone the same fate that befell his companion.

A shout of fear now escaped the rest.

They were overwhelmed by superstitious dread.

In the midst of it a fearful whirring sound suddenly burst out, which was almost instantly followed by explosion after explosion, and man after man on the pyramid fell dead or wounded.

Terror seized upon the infidels.

Uttering shrieks of dread, those who remained alive fled precipitately, and Jack was left alone on top of the sacrificial altar.

He had closed his eyes expecting death.

But he opened them on a new lease of life.

Struggling to a sitting posture he glared around.

The scene of devastation continued among the populace outside of the court-yard walls, for they were mown down like hay before the scythe, and ran for their lives in all directions.

Faster and more furious came the shots.

Jack located them down on the pretty little lake.

There floated the Typhoon, his friends on the deck clad in their suits of mail, standing around the wonderful magazine gun Jack had invented, which was pouring its destructive fire out at the Peruvians, and had saved his life.

"Hurrah!" screamed the boy, his eyes flashing fire. "Give it to them, boys! Jack Wright yet lives to beat his enemies!"

An answering shout came up from the trio, attesting to the fact that they heard him, and Fritz and Aljoe sprang ashore.

They came rushing through a street toward the pyramid armed to the teeth, and dashing through the gates, they mounted the pyramid and soon reached the boy.

To liberate him only occupied a moment, and he warmly shook hands with them and grasped a brace of pistols.

Down in the city on the other side some of the natives had seen what they did, and came to a pause.

Realizing that an effort was being made to rescue their prisoner, they armed themselves and came rushing back yelling like demons.

CHAPTER XVI.

LOST IN THE CAVERN.

"Run for the boat! There's a thousand after us!" cried Aljoe.

"Donner und blitzen, Shack, git by der front ouf me of you git shot."

"I'm all right so far, Fritz! Give them another volley, boys!"

Flying through the street the three were pursued by the horde who were using stone slings, javelins and arrows, and the missiles whistled like hail around the trio.

Those that struck Fritz and Aljoe's metal clad bodies did them no harm, but Jack was exposed to great danger.

They fired back several volleys from their weapons, and kept on until they were near the lake, when Tim yelled:

"Git out o' ther way, an' I'll fire ther gun at 'em, lads!"

Dashing behind one of the buildings they cleared the street for Tim, and a moment later the rapid fire gun was firing its destructive shots at the horde again.

The Quichuas paused.

Scores of them were falling.

A retreat was made and the gun stopped.

Then the three managed to get aboard of the Typhoon.

There the gun was hauled inside and our friends followed, the boat was sunk out of sight and she started away.

The arched opening had led Tim into this lake with the boat, and when they returned to it and passed into the subterranean crystal cavern again the old sailor detailed what happened.

Having emerged upon the pond they had seen what was occurring to Jack, and at once opened fire on the natives with the result already known. Fritz shot the Incas with a rifle.

Jack then explained what had befallen himself.

The boat was returned to the pillar with the winding stair, and brought to a pause there.

"Now is our time to go for the golden god and the gem-studded ornaments above," said the boy. "We have thrown the whole settlement in a panic and must take advantage of it."

"How ve oben dot drap-doors?" asked Fritz.

"Blow it to pieces with a bomb."

"Und den?"

"Throw everything down into the lake. When we leave we can send the boat to the bottom, pick up the spoils and depart."

"Ay, but thar's sure ter be some o' ther swabs in ther temple ter dispute us!" said Tim. "An' I reckon they'll fight like cats ter git rid on us. How is we ter manage?"

"One man can hold the doors against an army if he is armed with some of our hand-grenades."

"That's so," said Aljoe. "Got another suit of armor?"

"Several. Get the ammunition ready."

While they were busy doingt his he put on his suit.

They then fastened the boat and went ashore, climbed the stairs, and listening at the closed trap, the boy heard the sounds of many people in the room above.

He secured a torpedo under the trap, and retreating to a safe distance, after connecting it to an electric wire, he joined the other end of the copper wire to a battery.

A terrific explosion followed.

The deafening report rang through the cavern, calling forth innumerable echoes, a cloud of dust and dirt was blown in all directions, and they heard the men in the temple yelling.

Jack went up in the shaft and found the trap destroyed.

Peering into the room, he saw a large number of the Incas rushing from the place, and hurled a grenade after them.

It struck the floor in back of them, and, burst with a deafening report, sent a shower of stones flying through the room, and elicited a fearful outcry from the priests.

Within a moment afterwards the temple was empty.

Jack and his companions then rushed in.

The sun idol was evidently very heavy, as it rested upon its beautiful pedestal, but being round in shape, they rolled it to the floor and pushed it to the opening.

Down it went with a terrible crash that threatened to smash the column to pieces, and from here they rolled it through the door and sent it flying through the air, down into the lake.

Old age had caused the joints of the exquisite pedestal to part, and they had no trouble to rend it to pieces and send it flying down after the rich idol.

At this juncture the Incas discovered what they were doing, and came rushing in again, yelling and firing their weapons.

None of the missiles injured Jack and his friends.

Aljoe flung several of the grenades at the natives, and when they burst, they dealt terrible destruction right and left.

But they did not deter the sun worshippers.

As soon as one fell, there were scores to take his place, and death had no terrors for them when they saw their sanctuary so ruthlessly despoiled by the hands of the invaders.

Jack saw that it was useless to try and keep them back.

"Retreat!" he shouted. "Nothing can stop them."

"But the rest of the treasure——" panted Aljoe.

"We have enough already to burden the Typhoon heavily."

"Then come on!"

They sent a shower of bombs at the Incas to hold them in check until they could get out, and then dove down into the shaft and hastened down the stairs.

The scene of excitement above was appalling.

The Incas were rendered maniacal by the loss of their idol, and came flying after them.

Aboard of the boat sprang our friends, and they cut her free.

"Bombard the shaft and blow it to pieces!" yelled Jack. "If you don't, they will be down here after us."

Scores of the infuriated natives came flying down the stairs, and Jack started the boat away just in time to prevent them boarding her.

Armed with the grenades, his friends remained out on deck, and as a shower of arrows came whizzing through the air toward them, they let a volley of the bombs drive at the great pillar.

The bursting grenades tore the crystal column to pieces, and it fell into the lake with a tremendous crash.

Up splashed the water, and down went the natives who had been on the column, and the search-light showed Jack a number of big canoes coming into the lake through the arched opening that led in from the pond.

The boy drove the boat away in the gloom.

Calling his friends inside, he put out the lights.

He then sunk the Typhoon to the bottom of the lake.

In that safe retreat they were safe from observation.

Not until then did they breathe easy, for the sun worshippers had been aroused to a pitch of impetuous fury which nothing could quell except their death and the recovery of the treasure.

It was decided to remain where they were until the excitement abated.

Besides, they were all worn out by their past exertions.

They took turns at sleeping.

On the following evening the boat ascended to the surface, a supply of air was taken in, and she went down again.

Nothing was seen of the Quichuas.

Next morning a second supply of air was compressed in the reservoirs, and Jack started the electric lights and steered the boat over to the spot where the column had fallen.

This spot was easily located.

Great remnants of the massive pillar lay scattered all over the bottom of the lake in that place, and they began to hunt for the golden sun and its pedestal which had fallen near there.

The depth at this point was twenty-five feet.

A short search revealed the objects of their quest, and they dropped the Typhoon to the bottom and put on their diving suits.

Here they left the boat, and rigging tackles, they hoisted the image and the pedestal upon the deck, where they were secured with ropes.

Jack then began to figure in the pilot-house.

He formed an estimate of the probable weight of the ballast they had added, and comparing it with the amount of water ballast and the buoyancy of his boat, he found that the boat could carry the gold.

It was nightfall by the time they were in readiness to depart.

Every one was in high spirits.

"That gold will net each one of us an independent fortune

If we can manage to carry it safely to civilization and sell it," said Jack.

"You see that my story was no myth, then," laughed Aljoe.

"Shall I git her under way, my lad?" questioned Tim, just then.

"Yes, we have air enough left for three hours, and that will do to carry us out into the lake," replied the boy, consulting the reservoir register. "Let her go, Tim."

"Den I dake off dot difing suids," Fritz exclaimed, walking away.

The old sailor knew that the opening through which they came was located in the north wall of the subterranean lake and he steered the boat for it and soon reached the wall.

Here the search for the exit began.

But despite every effort Tim failed to find it.

Several hours passed by and the night waned, the boat was driven up and down along the wall, the search-light was played all over the rocks, and yet no opening was found.

They had to go to the surface again for air.

A second attempt was made with no better result, and the day passed away and a second night set in.

There was a troubled look upon Jack's face.

"I'm afraid we are lost in this cavern!" he exclaimed.

CHAPTER XVII.

LURED INTO A TRAP.

AFTER all their hardships to secure the treasure of the idolators it was hard to reconcile themselves to the new fate which befell them.

"How have you been steering, Tim?" queried Jack, an hour later.

"By ther compass, my lad," answered the old sailor. "Due north."

"Just look at the binnacle now."

"Why—thar's Whiskers a-squatting on top of it."

"Yes, and do you see what that mischievous monkey is doing?"

"Bless my heart if ther lubber ain't robbed ther larder an' is firin' beans into ther binnacle."

"Do you think the beans have affected the compass any?"

"I don't see how so few on 'em could."

"Well, you'd better examine it and see."

The boat was stopped and Tim drove his pet away, opened the binnacle door and peered inside.

Below the card there was about a half a pint of beans, numberless pieces of cotton waste, half a dozen screws, a large bolt, several cartridges, and a big plug of Tim's tobacco.

"Holy smoke!" gasped the old sailor. "The little devil!"

His good eye bulged out, his hair fairly stood on end, and he gave the monkey a cuff on the ear that brought a howl from his lips and caused him to scamper away.

"What's the matter, Tim, your face looks like a hard winter?"

"Good Lord 'Mighty," groaned the old sailor. "Looker here, Jack."

He took out the compass card and drew out the contents.

Jack burst out laughing.

"Do you mean to say Whiskers stuffed the compass with those things?" questioned the boy, in amazement.

"Ay—ay," said Tim, re-adjusting the card. "Jest look here."

"Why, we are at the south end of the cavern," said Jack.

"As true as you're a borned sinner ther compass worked just in ther opposite direction than ther right way on the accounts o' them things being poked inter ther binnacle," groaned Tim.

This was really the case.

Instead of searching the northern end of the cavern for the opening they had been poking around the southern end.

Wasting no more time, Tim steered the boat away, and, upon reaching the other end of the cavern, they renewed the search.

Within an hour the old sailor found the exit, and drove the boat into the tunnel, and headed for the lake.

They reached it in due time, and ascended to the surface. As the tricycle emerged from the water she came up under a large flotilla of canoes containing many of the natives.

Several of them were upset, spilling their occupants out into the water, and a scene of intense excitement ensued among them.

"Jerusalem, we've run right into a nest of the beggars!" cried Jack, glancing out the window at the boats which were flying in all directions afraid of the mysterious appearing boat.

The moon was flooding the lake with a silvery glow that lit everything up as if by sunshine.

Fritz and Aljoe ran out on deck.

As soon as the natives saw them they recovered from their panic, for they realized that the Typhoon was a boat and its inmates men.

Moreover, they recognized the adventurers as their enemies, and came dashing toward the electric tricycle with amazing speed.

"Don't fire at them, boys!" cried Jack to his friends, when he saw them draw their pistols. "The advantage here is all on our side. Spare them. We can easily escape."

"Ach, I vant to fight!" retorted Fritz.

"Well, you can't fight them."

"Shall I run away from 'em, Jack?" queried Tim.

"By all means."

The old sailor pulled the lever, the wheels spun faster, and like an arrow from a bow the Typhoon dashed away and rapidly left the natives' canoes far behind.

They were quickly distanced.

In an hour the island of the sun worshippers, and the canoes of the Incas vanished from sight in the distance.

That was the last our friends saw of them.

Away sped the boat across the moonlit lake, bearing off its treasure of gold, and in due time she reached the mouth of the river that led up to the Amazon.

Here she came to a pause.

Our friends turned in.

On the following morning, amidst a terrible thunderstorm the Typhoon ran up into the river, and Jack examined it more critically, and saw that this great stream was not of the same natural origin as the great river.

There was abundant evidence on every hand that the rock was hewn from its bed by the hand of man at a remote period.

No doubt was entertained that the same barbarians who had created such wonders in that region at the time of Pizarro had formed this connection between the lake and the Tuihe.

"It is wonderful," remarked Jack, "what stupendous works the ancients accomplished without the aid of such tools as the modern workmen employ to carry out their projects."

"Gee! that ain't nuthin'," said Tim. "I reckoner when I wuz in ther navy our enemies wuz entrenched behind a breastwork half a mile from ther coast, from which they wuz a-bombardin' us, an' we couldn't git a shot at 'em till I laid ther plan."

"And what did you do?" questioned Aljoe, in amused tones.

"Wot did I do? Why, I——"

"Here coom a whopper!" interposed Fritz, with a grin.

"Avast now, yer Dutch lubber!"

"I don't vos sayin' a vord."

"Well, as I wuz a-sayin', I——"

But just then Fritz picked up his accordeon and began to work off a tune that drowned Tim's voice.

The old sailor gnashed his teeth and rolled up his sleeves.

"Belay thar!" he yelled. "Stop it afore I runs yer down."

"Oxcoose me," grinned Fritz. "So long dot I don't vanted dot yarns to hear, for vhy I can't by my moose blay?"

"I'll spin this yarn or bust!" growled Tim. "Git out o' here."

"No, I von't."

"Then by golly I'll make yer!"

Tim stumped over toward Fritz with blood in his eye, but ere he could reach him the fat boy fled.

"Go on with your yarn, Tim," invited Aljoe, with a grin.

"I'll kill that pot-stomached bull frog yet!" threatened the ancient mariner, taking a big chew of plug. "Whar wuz I, lad?"

"You wanted to blow up the entrenchment."

"Oh, yes. Now I remember. Waal, I—" but here Tim paused.

"Go ahead; what are you stopping for?"

"Hang me if Fritz ain't made me fergit wot I wuz goin' ter say."

"Can't you remember the story?"

"No. blast the luck."

"How unfortunate!"

But as Aljoe said this a look of the most intense relief swept over his face, and Tim stumped away grumbling to himself over the disastrous trick his memory played him.

The tricycle boat continued on up the river, passed the rapids in safety, and finally ran into the Madeira.

They did not pause at any of the towns or villages that were seen upon the shores for fear the sight of the gold might excite the cupidity of the natives and lead to trouble.

In this manner the Typhoon got as far as Borba without meeting with any accident, when a sail was sighted.

It was a good sized ship, with a full head of canvas spread to the breeze, and was tacking from one side of the river to the other when Tim descried it.

"She has ther look o' a Yankee craft," said the old sailor to Jack, as they stood out on deck in the afternoon, watching it.

"Can you make out her name yet?" asked the boy.

"Not yet, although this are a good glass."

"Let me take a look."

"Here's ther binocular."

Tim handed over the glass and Jack applied it to his eye.

One look was enough for him, and he lowered it, saying:

"No wonder you couldn't see the name. There is none on her bow."

"Oh! She has it painted on ther starn then, I suppose."

"Very likely. Hello! What's that—a signal of distress?"

"Flag raised upside down? Yes. I wonder wot's gone wrong?"

"We can soon find out. I say—Fritz!"

"Yah!" replied the fat boy, who was steering in the pilot-house.

"Steer for that ship; she has hauled to."

The Dutch boy complied, and the electric tricycle rapidly bore down upon the vessel, and presently reached her.

"Ship ahoy!" yelled Jack.

"Ahoy!" came the reply, and a man rushed to the bulwarks and peered over at him. "For God's sake come aboard."

"What's the matter?" demanded the boy in some surprise.

"The crew have deserted and the captain is trying to kill himself. I can't manage him alone. Help me, will you?"

"I'll board you in one moment!" replied Jack.

The Typhoon ran over to an accommodation ladder, and the boy hastily ascended and leaped upon the deck.

No sooner had he done so, however, when a dozen sailors who had been hiding behind the bulwarks sprang upon him.

"Treachery!" gasped the boy, struggling to get free.

"Jack Wright—you are my prisoner!" cried an exultant voice.

He glanced up at the speaker.

It was Pedro Durango, his old enemy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"TIT FOR TAT."

WITH his arms pinioned by a man on each side, and another one binding his wrists behind his back, it was almost useless for Jack to resist, as he lay upon the deck.

He was upon the point of giving utterance to a cry for help, when one of his opponents observed his design, and slapping his hand over his mouth, he stifled the cry.

Hidden from the view of his friends by the bulwarks,

Jack's troubles were not observed, and Aljoe came up the ladder to the deck.

Before he saw what was going on, they struck him a crushing blow that felled him stunned to the deck.

"Oh! You've killed me!" he shrieked, as he fell.

These words reached Tim's ears, and a suspicion of treachery flashed across the old salt's mind immediately.

He lost no time in starting the boat away.

Durango ripped out an expletive when he saw this done, and swinging himself up into the shrouds, he yelled:

"*Carramba!* Come back a here! Haul to zere!"

"Wot do this mean?" demanded Tim.

"If you do not come back I keel your friends."

"Treachery, jist as I 'spected!" roared Tim.

He stopped the boat, feeling very uneasy, and Durango cried:

"See here! I show you zat I have de upper han'!"

His men lifted Jack and Aljoe up in plain sight.

"Prisoners!" gasped Fritz, in dismay.

"Wot did yer do that fer?" roared Tim, furiously.

"Senor," replied the South American, "I have follow you all ze way from New York, an' I wait here a long time for to meet you—"

"Ain't you Pedro Durango?" asked Tim, as the truth dawned on him.

"*Compadre*, yes!"

"That settles it," groaned Tim, dejectedly.

"If you do not surrender I kill dese two men."

"Good Lord!" gasped Tim, in horror.

He saw that the Spaniard had the upper hand, and hastily conferring with Fritz, they turned over the situation.

"Shall we give in to 'em?" asked the old sailor in perplexity.

"*Ach Gott!* Vot you tink—I'm a fool?" demanded Fritz.

"Wot else kin we do?"

"Blay a dricks on dem loafers."

"How?"

"I show you."

Fritz had hit upon a plan, and he rapidly uncoupled some of the electric wires from the switch-board and put them in connection with other binding posts secured to the walls.

When this was done, he said:

"Now, ve got dem down here on der poat, und if ve don't got oursellufs efen mit dem, dot don't vas my faults."

"Yer mean ter pertend ter give in?"

"Oxactly. Gief dem der hail, vill yer?"

"Ahoy thar!" yelled Tim. "Don't yer hurt our mess-mates."

"Den you must give me ze electric boat," replied Durango.

"Will yer leave us go free if we do?"

"*Ave Maria*, yes. We only want ze gold."

"Werry good. We gives in."

"Come alongside of ze Blue Jacket."

"Ay, ay!"

"Dot vas der shibs vot Aljoe dit wanted to charter," said Fritz.

Could they have seen the name of the craft sooner, they might not now have been placed in this predicament.

Tim steered the Typhoon over to the vessel, and as she ran alongside, he yelled up at his enemies:

"Come down here. I can't leave ther wheel till some one takes it, or she'll drift away again."

Wild with avaricious greed to get the gold with which he knew the electric tricycle boat was laden, Durango called to a couple of his men to follow him, and came down the ladder to the deck of the Typhoon.

They were armed with revolvers, and had a look upon their faces which plainly indicated that they would not fail to use the weapons if the two friends offered the least resistance.

Hastening up to the pilot-house, they ordered Tim and Fritz out, leveled their pistols at the two and threatened to shoot them if they showed the first sign of treachery or failed to obey orders.

The two friends came out obediently.

"Where is ze gold now?" eagerly asked the outlaw.

"Thar's a big chunk over thar, under that tarpaulin, on deck," replied Tim, "an' ther rest of it's down below, stowed away."

"Bind dem!" said Durango to his men.

"Wot! Ain't we ter have our liberty, as yer promised?"

"No! Fool—you sink I let you go? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then we don't surrender!" said Tim, doggedly.

He returned to the pilot-house with Fritz, and the sailors ran in after him, when one of them happened to touch the hand rail and received a heavy current of electricity.

He uttered a yell and tried to let go, but couldn't, and his companions became similarly fastened to the metal wheel.

"*El demonio!*" yelled Durango. "What zis means—eh?"

He rushed over to one of the men to liberate him, but the moment he touched the fellow's hands he too was caught.

The shouts he uttered were blood-curdling, and the three squirmed and struggled with desperate energy to get free, but could not do so.

"Hooray, Fritz, you're a trump!" roared Tim. "We've got 'em!"

"Tie der son of a sea gooks ub!" said the Dutch boy.

This was done, and the outlaws were flung on the floor, whereupon Fritz cut out the current and restored the wire.

Tim then drove the boat away from the ship.

When the Typhoon was at a safe distance, the old sailor brought her to a pause, and yelled:

"We've collared yer skipper an' two men. If yer dares ter injure Wright or Aljoe, I'll blow these lubbers' heads off!"

"Good for you, Tim!" shouted Jack, but the words had hardly left his lips, when the mate of the Blue Jacket pushed him away from the bulwark, and he fell to the deck beside Aljoe.

The rascals saw that Tim was not idly boasting.

Durango and his two companions were in plain sight, and they held a consultation to decide what was best to be done.

This turn of events was so unexpected to them that they were east into a panic for awhile; but they soon recovered.

"Ahoy thar!" yelled Tim.

"Well, what do you want?" asked the mate.

"My two friends."

"You can't have them."

"If yer don't give 'em up I'll wreck yer vessel."

"Bah! You would kill your own friends if you do that."

"You'll seel" determinedly cried Tim.

"Vot you vos going to do now?" Fritz asked.

"I'll send ther Typhoon beneath that craft an' plant a torpedo under her," grimly answered Tim. "Haul them lubbers in."

The three prisoners were taken inside, and preparations were made for a descent to carry out a project Tim had formed.

As soon as everything was in readiness the Typhoon went down, keenly watched by the crew of the Blue Jacket.

Tim sank her 'about fifteen feet, and steering her over toward the ship, he brought her to a pause under the hull.

He then put on a diving suit, and taking a big torpedo and a coil of insulated wire, he went out on deck.

Here he fastened the torpedo to the ship's rudder, and fastening the wire to it, he carried the other end to a binding-post on the outside of the pilot-house and fastened it there.

Passing inside again, the old sailor drove the boat away until the wire was almost taut and sent her surfaceward.

Opening a window, he shouted:

"I'll give yer five minutes ter send my friends back here. If yer don't do it, I'll fire ther torpedo I've fastened ter yer ship."

By way of reply, the crew of the Blue Jacket suddenly threw open a port, protruded the muzzle of a brass gun, and fired a shot at the electric tricycle boat.

The piece was loaded with a handful of rifle bullets, and many of them struck the Typhoon's side like hailstones.

Her tough steel plates resisted them, however.

Tim was furious.

"I'll teach 'em a lesson!" he growled.

He then touched a press button which sent a current of electricity flashing over the wire to the torpedo.

There came a smothered report, a mass of water shot up in the air astern of the ship, and the rudder was blown to pieces and scattered all over the river.

A yell of horror escaped the crew of the ship, for they imagined that the bottom of the craft had been stove in.

They made a rush for the boats, some sprang overboard, and a scene of intense confusion ensued.

Up into the wind swung the ship, with flapping canvas, and while the boats were putting away from her side, the old sailor sent the Typhoon dashing toward her.

The crew had all gotten away when the tricycle boat reached the Blue Jacket, and running her alongside, Tim left the wheel in Fritz's hands and clambered on board.

He looked around for Jack and Aljoe.

But they were gone!

CHAPTER XIX.

UPSET ON THE RIVER.

THE moment the rudder was blown off the Blue Jacket the mate of that craft had ordered two of his men to convey Jack and Aljoe into one of the quarter-boats.

He realized the importance of holding these two hostages.

Down went the boat, a half dozen of the miscreants scrambled in, the mate followed, and, bending to the oars, the crew rowed the boat for the shore, about one hundred yards away.

It was lined with dense shrubbery, and they soon reached it.

Here the boats were beached, and the prisoners were taken ashore.

Plunging in amid the thick undergrowth, the rascals went on with their two prisoners until they reached a glen.

Here they came to a pause, and as the rest came straggling in one by one, inside of a quarter of an hour the whole crew were congregated in one spot.

One of the men was then sent back to the shore to keep a watch upon the movements of the electric boat.

Jack had been flung upon the ground beside Aljoe.

"Confound the luck!" the boy muttered; "I was in hopes that they would leave us on the ship. Our friends would then have been sure to have saved us."

"But if the vessel was going to sink," said Aljoe, "we might have gone down with the wreck before they could do so."

"Nonsense! She ain't going to sink."

"How do you know?"

"Do you suppose Tim would be such a fool as to jeopardize our lives?"

"No; it don't seem likely."

"Didn't you notice where the explosion sounded?"

"At the stern it seemed to me."

"Exactly. And didn't you notice how the ship behaved afterward?"

"She ran up into the wind."

"Well, all this shows me plainly enough that Tim merely has blown off her rudder."

"Well, he seared the crew off of her."

"That was evidently just what he designed to do."

The mate of the Blue Jacket had been intently listening to this dialogue with an ugly look of resentment upon his face.

He now drew nearer to the two and exclaimed, angrily:

"Your friend has placed us in a nice plight. Without food or water we will have a hard time of it in this wilderness."

"It's your own fault," coolly replied Jack. "You had no right to embark upon a thieving expedition of this kind."

"We won't discuss my actions," savagely said the mate. "Let it suffice that I know now that the ship ain't lost, and I'll recover her and rig a new rudder if she is injured no worse than that."

"Why have you kept us prisoners?" asked the boy.

"Simply because I wished to."

"It was useless for you to expect to wrest that treasure from my craft," said the boy. "We had every advantage on our side."

"Oh, we may get it yet," answered the mate. "Do you imagine we embarked on a cruise of this kind for nothing? Oh, no. The gold is an incentive which will prompt my men to fight like demons to get it, and before we are through you will find that, although we are temporarily subdued, we ain't whipped yet."

"Go ahead," said Jack, mockingly.

Just then the spy joined them.

"The Typhoon has got the ship in tow and is going down the river, sir," said he, saluting the mate.

"Let them go. They won't desert their friends. They know we have got the pair ashore here and will certainly make an effort to rescue them. Follow the craft up and report to me what they do with it."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the man.

He saluted again, plunged into the bushes and disappeared.

An hour passed by, during which time the crew discussed their situation, and when the spy came in again, he said to the mate:

"The crew of the electric boat have towed the Blue Jacket across the river out of our reach, and tied her up to the shore. They are now coming up the stream slowly along this shore."

"Good! We yet have the quarter-boats. At the first opportunity we can row over to the ship, and get aboard of her, as she has not sunk. She will afford us a better refuge than these woods. Don't let the crew of the electric boat know where we are, as they may fire upon us. As we are not all armed we would stand a poor show against them."

"Better hide the boats, sir," suggested one of the crew. "As they are coming up this side of the river, they'll see them on the shore."

"All right; I'll leave that to you to attend to."

The man nodded, and calling a couple of his companions they hastened away to put the boats out of sight.

Jack felt uneasy as he watched them.

He was impatient to escape, and as an idea suggested itself to his mind, he rolled over close to Aljoe, and whispered:

"Can you loosen my bonds with your teeth?"

"I will try," was the guarded answer.

"Perhaps we can get away if you do."

"How am I to get free too?"

"Once you liberate me, I'll cut your bonds with my pocket knife."

"It will take time to do it."

"Go ahead. It's getting dark. Your actions will be hidden."

The young man set to work upon the knots as stealthily as a cat, and the shadows of evening lengthened over the scene.

With the dusky twilight the already gloomy woods grew darker, and thus favored, Aljoe's actions were better concealed.

The sailors were paying no attention to the prisoners now for the Typhoon was passing by where they were encamped and many of them were peering through the bushes at her.

It rapidly grew darker, and Aljoe worked away slowly, but with great determination, at the knots which bound Jack's wrists.

The sailors dared not kindle a fire, as they wished to keep their location concealed from the crew of the boat.

When the Typhoon was gone, the mate cried:

"Now, boys, get out the boats again!"

"What are you going to do, sir?" one of the men asked.

"Row over to the ship and get aboard of her."

"Shall we take the prisoners?"

"Yes—of course."

Jack's heart sank.

That ended his hope to escape.

"Look out, Aljoe, they're coming for us," he whispered.

"I've almost finished," gasped Aljoe.

"Never mind—they'll see you. Roll away."

"Only a slight strain at your bonds will release you."

"I don't dare venture it now."

"But you can later on," said Aljoe.

He rolled away from beside the boy, so as not to arouse the suspicions of the sailors, and a few minutes afterwards two of them drew near and cut the ropes tying their ankles.

"Get up!" said one of the men.

They assisted our friends to arise, and Jack asked:

"What are you going to do with us now?"

"Come along with us and you'll see," was the gruff reply.

Most of the rest had stolen away through the bushes to the river bank, and the two prisoners were led after them.

The two quarter-boats had been drawn from among the

weeds where they had been concealed, and the men were embarking in them when Jack and Aljoe came along.

They were put into one of the boats, and sat in the stern sheets side by side, when it was rowed out upon the gloomy river.

Jack nudged his companion.

He had worked his hands free.

In his jacket pocket was a knife, and he got it out without being seen, opened it behind his back, and carefully cut Aljoe's bonds.

To do this occupied considerable time, for the boat had reached the middle of the river by the time it was completed.

It was impossible to allude to it, for the crew of the boat was facing them as they rowed, but Jack nudged his friend again.

"Capsize her!" he exclaimed.

And before the startled inmates of the boats understood that they were free, they grasped the gunwales, violently rocked the boat from side to side, and then by an extraordinary effort they upset her, and all hands fell into the river.

An outcry arose from the men. They could not deter Jack now.

They could all swim, and easily kept afloat.

"The prisoners are escaping!" yelled the mate.

Some distance ahead, the other boat was going on, but when this yell arose, she turned around, and came flying back to the assistance of the men in the water.

"Dive, and swim under water so they won't see us!" Jack panted, as they breasted the currents, side by side.

"Which way are you going?" gasped Aljoe.

"Back where we just came from."

"What for?"

"Because the Typhoon is on that side."

Down they went beneath the surface, and as both were expert swimmers, they rapidly made away from that locality.

Buried as they were beneath the water, the crew of the other boat could not see them, and bent all their energies to getting the overturned boat righted, and the capsized crew in again.

Jack and his companion made rapid progress back to shore, and as the boy glanced up the river he saw a distant light moving along close to the embankment.

"There's the Typhoon!" he exclaimed.

"And here's the shore," said Aljoe.

They had reached shoal waters, and waded upon land, where they paused to wring out their clothing.

"Let us run up the shore," suggested Jack. "When we reach the boat we can hail Tim, and he'll take us aboard."

"Good! Trot ahead. There's a sandy beach, as the tide is low," replied Aljoe. "Just hear the fellows swear whom we escaped."

The sounds out on the dark river were far from being elegant, and the two ran ahead toward the mellow electric lights which they saw gleaming close to the shore some distance away.

On they plunged, and more than half the distance had been covered, when suddenly a huge, dark object shot out of the undergrowth in front of them, heading for the water.

It was an enormous bear which had come down to drink, and as the two runners did not see the brute until they were right on top of it, there was a collision.

They both fell over the beast.

Down upon the sand they pitched head first, and with a fierce growl the bear turned around and saw them.

"For Heaven's sake, what was that?" gasped Jack, arising.

"A bear, by thunder!" replied Aljoe, seeing what it was.

The beast now made a rush for the two, and they scattered right and left and ran with might and main.

Neither of them were armed.

To meet this hairy monster under such conditions was the height of madness, and they lost no time in running; but the beast went lumbering after them with wonderful speed.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

THE speed at which Jack and Aljoe ran was extraordinary, but fast as they went they were no match for the bear, for the beast began to rapidly overhaul them.

"It's gaining!" cried Jack. "Look out, Aljoe!"

"Good Lord! I'm getting winded, too."

"Keep on—only a little further—and we'll reach the Typhoon."

"Yell to Tim, will you? Let him know we're here."

"No! Here's the boat now. We can't stay here. To escape the bear we must take to the river. We'll swim to the boat. If we raise a row those fellows down the stream will know what's up."

By this time the snarling beast was close to their heels, and Jack ran for the water and plunged in, followed by Aljoe.

The bear paused for a moment hesitatingly.

Both of the fugitives struck out for the boat and swam hard for they were behind her, and she was slowly going along yet.

The next instant the bear plunged into the water after them and came paddling along in pursuit, snorting and grunting with every stroke it made, yet swimming rapidly.

Jack and his companion reached the boat ahead of it, and getting up on the down-curved stern they reached the deck in safety, upon seeing which the beast abandoned the pursuit and swam back to shore.

For several moments the drenched pair stood there panting for breath, and when Jack recovered himself he uttered a deep sigh.

"Safe so far!" he exclaimed.

"Won't Tim and Fritz be amazed to see us!" laughed Aljoe.

"Let's take them by surprise by quietly pouncing in on them."

"Very well; lead the way."

Jack quietly stole up to the pilot-house, and was just reaching out his hand to grasp the knob and fling it open, when he was startled to hear Durango and his two friends talking in the turret.

The rascals had possession of the boat!

"We go along de shore slow," said Durango, "an' maybe de crew of de Blue Jacket will see us in ze electric lights."

"That's the best plan," assented one of the men.

"Carramba! What deed you do wiz de two prisoners?"

"They lie in the other room tied hand and foot, sir," said the other man.

Durango chuckled, and then exclaimed:

"Perros! Dey deed not tied me strong enough to hold wong infant. Why, wiz wong burst of ze bonds I wuz free, senores. An' den we deed take zens by surprise so queek dat before dey could do anysing dey wuz prisoners, *por mi madre!*"

He laughed loud and long over his success.

Jack stole away from the turret with a troubled look upon his face, and Aljoe followed him back to the stern.

"Did you hear what they said?" he asked.

"Yes. The whole situation is as plain as daylight."

"The question for us to solve is how to regain the boat."

"Oh, that's easy enough if we enter by the stern door."

"Should we fire, we cannot be merciful, Aljoe."

"I am satisfied to kill the three rascals."

"Then come in and arm yourself."

As noiseless as two shadows they crept over to the door, and opening it, they passed into the water chamber.

The second door was noiselessly opened, and going into the store-room, they each secured a loaded revolver.

Jack then silently crept through the boat, and saw Tim and Fritz lying upon the floor of the cabin, bound and gagged.

The boy held up his finger to them, enjoining silence, and was passing swiftly toward the door opening into the turret, when it was flung open, and one of the sailors entered.

He uttered a cry of alarm and recoiled when he saw Jack and Aljoe, but the boy rapidly fired a shot at him.

With a cry of pain the man fell to the floor wounded, and never pausing, Jack sprang into the turret.

Durango stood at the wheel, with the other man beside

him, and they were both looking around with startled expressions when Jack and Aljoe rushed in.

A fierce yell escaped the bandit when he saw Jack, and his hand flew to his belt, he drew a big revolver and aimed at the boy.

Before he could press the trigger Jack fired.

"*Dios mio!*" yelled Durango, throwing up his arms. "I'm a dead man!"

Bang! went a shot from Aljoe's pistol.

It struck Durango's companion and he gave a yell of pain.

The outlaw chief fell flat on his face, and his friend flung open the door and rushed out on deck and jumped overboard.

Aljoe ran into the cabin and liberated Tim and Fritz, and Jack handcuffed Durango and his companion.

The South American had received a scalp wound that knocked the senses out of him, but his companion had been hit in the side, where a painful but not fatal wound was inflicted.

Jack bandaged their injuries and Tim and Fritz came in, received explanations and locked the prisoners in the water chamber.

"The boat is ours again!" cried the boy, delightedly.

"I'll bet that those lubbers won't git free agin in a hurry!" said Tim, "if I have to watch 'em night an' day myself."

"And I'll bring Durango to justice when we reach civilization again!" hotly threatened Aljoe. "He has done enough mischief."

"How apoud dem yudder fellers in der poats?" asked Fritz.

"We'll run up to the Blue Jacket and see," Jack replied.

He thereupon steered the Typhoon down the river, and as the powerful search-light gleamed ahead, they saw the mate's two quarter-boats pulling toward the ship.

The rascals had seen the boat approaching long before Jack saw them and were trying to escape her.

"Haul to!" shouted the boy. "Haul to, or I'll run you down!"

"Never!" defiantly replied the mate. "Pull away, my lads!"

"Then take the consequence!" cried Jack.

He aimed the prow of the Typhoon straight for one of the boats, and added speed to the wheels.

The electric trieyele boat went ahead like a gunshot, and in a moment more her cut-water struck the quarter-boat. Crash—bang!

A fearful grinding and splintering followed.

The midship section of the boat was crushed in, the men were hurled into the river, and the Typhoon shot ahead.

Some distance further on rode the other boat.

Jack did not wait to parley with its inmates.

He had the game all in his own hands, and he meant to bring matters to a climax between himself and these rogues, as soon as possible by exerting all his power.

He aimed his boat at the other, and she flew ahead.

A moment later she struck her mark.

Up in the air the quarter-boat was driven, torn to fragments, and her yelling crew were spilled into the river.

On went the Typhoon, and rounding up, she came to a pause, and Jack reflected the glare of his search-light around.

The river was full of swimmers.

"Hold on there!" the boy shouted to them. "Come this way now, you scoundrels, or we will open fire on you!"

"Merey!" yelled the mate, in horror. "Don't shoot!"

"Will you submit to arrest, then?"

"Yes, yes! Anything, only spare our lives."

"Let every one of your crew come over here."

"All right, sir."

"One by one you can come aboard."

"We are satisfied."

"Tim!"

"Ay, ay!"

"Get ropes and bind them."

"Werry good, my lad."

"Fritz, you and Aljoe help him."

The three then went out on the deck.

By the glow of the electric lights they saw the swimmer come alongside of the boat, and as they boarded her one by one, they securely bound the rascals so they could not escape.

Every one of them were then locked up with Durango.

"That settles it," said Jack. "Let us go over to the ship and take her in tow. Then we can continue our journey home."

The Typhoon was headed across the river.

Fritz and Tim had secured the rudderless ship to a tree on the shore, and when they reached her she was cut loose and a towing hawser was rove from her bow to the stern of Jack's boat, and they proceeded down the river.

Every one was delighted over their success.

The Dutch boy prepared a delicious supper for them, and while they were at the table Jack said:

"We will stop at Rainha, and leave the ship and our prisoners there, as we can't be bothered with carrying them all the way home with us. They have committed crimes enough around here to cause their punishment."

The rest agreed with this proposition.

On the following day the Typhoon ran into the Amazon, and the journey to the sea was made in rapid time.

No accident befell them.

In due course of time they reached the city Jack spoke of, and having run up to the shore, they tied the ship up.

A Brazilian official then boarded the Typhoon.

He spoke Portuguese, but as Jack was familiar with that language, he easily made himself understood.

Without mentioning the treasure, the boy explained the lawless conduct of the Blue Jacket's crew, and told how Durango had murdered the old Indian woman.

He asked the official to prosecute the malefactors.

Durango's villainies as a bandit were well-known to the

official, and as there was a price set upon the rascal's head, he was glad to take charge of him, his crew and ship.

Having sent the prisoners ashore and made a deposition of the facts, Jack and his friends started off again.

They reached the sea in good season, and the ocean voyage was made to the United States without accident.

They finally reached Wrightstown.

Here the electric boat was put up, our friends went ashore with the parrot and the monkey, and the gold was sold.

It brought an immense sum of money.

This was divided into four parts, and each one of the quartette found themselves richer by thousands of dollars.

Aljoe's delight knew no bounds.

He liked the pretty fisher village so well, and felt so devoted to Jack, Tim and Fritz, that he settled there in business, and the three friends to-day number him as one of their truest adherents.

As for the young inventor and his companions, they were more than satisfied with the result of their voyage.

It had brought them fun, adventure and wealth, and that was just what they had started out to find.

They resumed their usual vocations, and the only break in the monotony of their lives was the building of another singular craft which Jack soon afterward invented.

As we expect to give you an account of it in another book, however, we must leave our friends thus employed for the present, and bring our story to its conclusion.

[THE END.]

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